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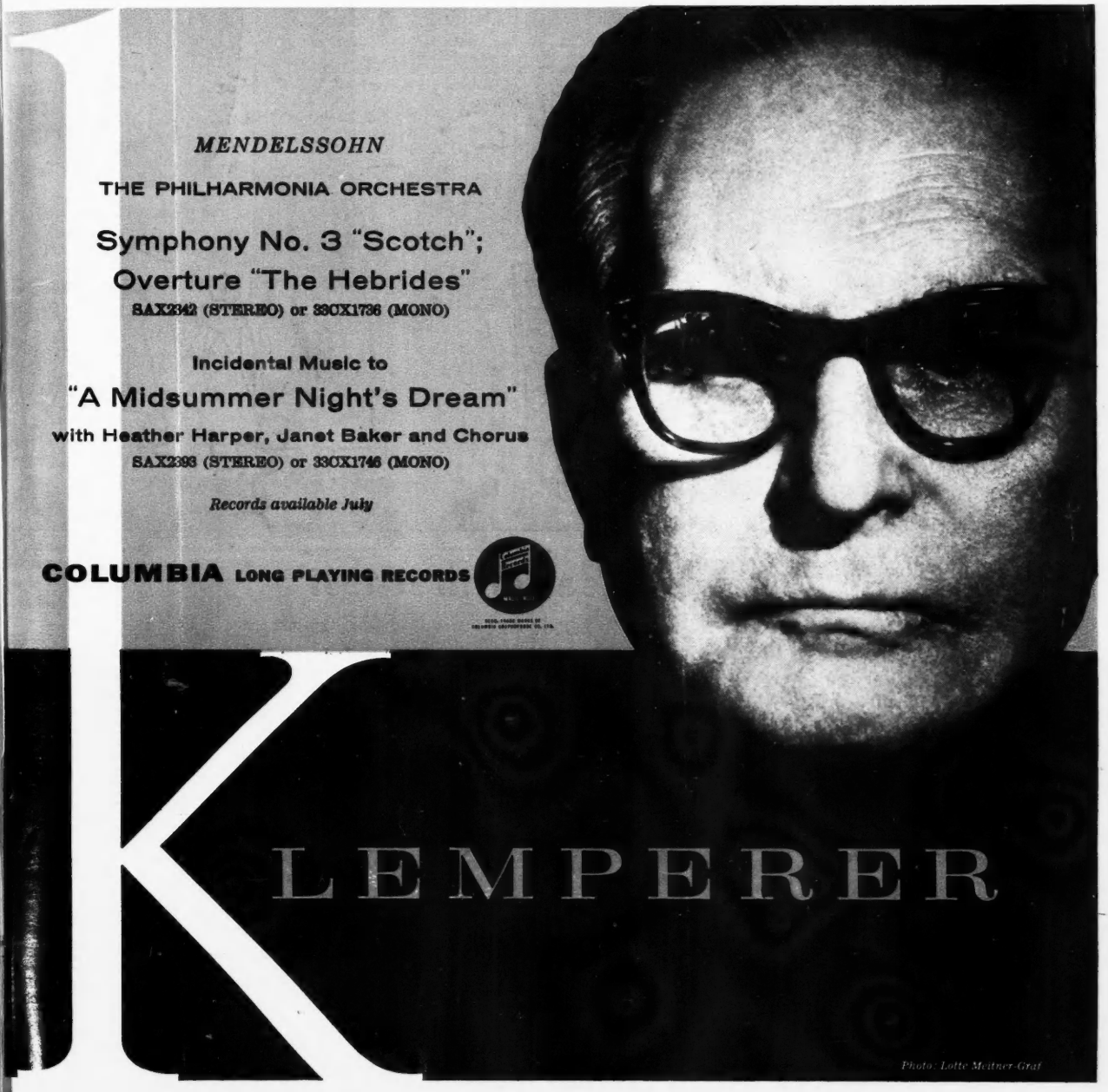
MUSIC & DRAMA

THE

GRAMOPHONE

JULY 1961 ONE SHILLING AND SIXPENCE

ROOM



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THE YEAR BOOK OF 1961 HI FI EQUIPMENT

with a foreword by Percy Wilson of THE GRAMOPHONE

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CONTENTS INCLUDE:

DETAILED INFORMATION ON THE LATEST EQUIPMENT. *Complete, illustrated list of all the finest equipment with technical specifications.*

WHAT IS HI FI? WHAT IS STEREO? *Clear descriptions for newcomers to hi fi.*

HOW TO CHOOSE HI FI. *Notes on what to look for when choosing amplifiers, tuners, speakers, motors, pick-ups, etc.*

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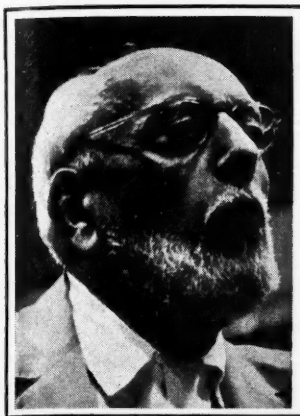
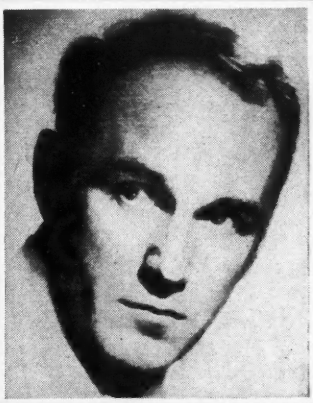


Ansermet

Bizet
SYMPHONY IN C;
JEUX D'ENFANTS *and*
LA JOLIE FILLE DE PERTH—Suite
conducting
L'Orchestre de la Suisse Romande
Ⓢ SXL 2275 Ⓜ LXT 5634

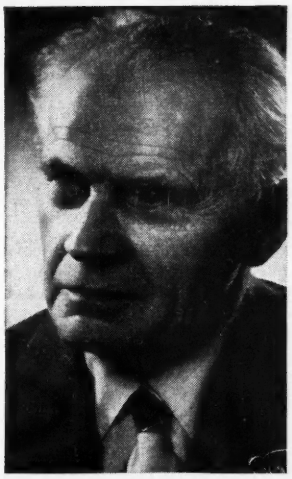


SVIATOSLAV Richter

Beethoven
'APPASSIONATA' SONATA;
'FUNERAL MARCH' SONATA
Ⓢ SB-2119 Ⓜ RB-16250

Backhaus

CARNEGIE HALL ENCORES
Schubert
IMPROMPTU IN A FLAT, Op. 142, No. 2;
Schumann
WARUM, Op. 12, No. 3;
Schubert-Liszt
SOIREE DE VIENNE, No. 6 IN A;
Brahms
INTERMEZZO IN C, Op. 119, No. 3;
Schubert
IMPROMPTU IN B FLAT, Op. 142, No. 3;
Chopin
ETUDE No. 14 IN F MINOR, Op. 25, No. 2;
Schumann
VOGEL ALS PROPHET;
Mozart
TURKISH MARCH from Sonata No. 11
in A, K.331 Ⓜ BR 3097



GARY Graffman

THE VIRTUOSO LISZT
Liszt
LIEBESTRAUM IN A FLAT *and*
ETUDE No. 3 IN D FLAT ('Un sospiro')
and HUNGARIAN RHAPSODY No. 11
IN A MINOR *and* IL PENSEROSO
and CONSOLATION No. 3 IN D FLAT;
Paganini-Liszt
ETUDES Nos. 1–6
Ⓢ SB-2118 Ⓜ RB-16249

JULIAN Bream

Mauro Giuliani
CONCERTO FOR GUITAR AND STRINGS;
Malcolm Arnold
GUITAR CONCERTO *(a)*
with the **Melos Ensemble**
(a) directed by **Malcolm Arnold**
Ⓜ RB-16252

HENRYK Szeryng

Lalo
SYMPHONIE ESPAGNOLE
with **The Chicago Symphony Orch.**
conducted by **Walter Hendl**
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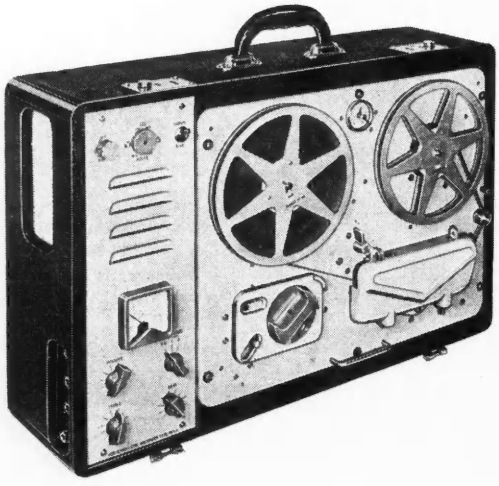
DECCA

STEREO OR MONO RECORDS

THE DECCA RECORD COMPANY LIMITED
DECCA HOUSE ALBERT EMBANKMENT LONDON SE1

RCA VICTOR MONO OR STEREO RECORDS



Vortexion
quality equipment

The W.V.B. recorder has an additional amplifier and head with provision for "before" and "after" record monitoring while the recording is in progress, and this also has echo facilities.

The W.V.A. recorder has provision for a plug in stereo head and can be supplied with this and stereo playback pre-amplifiers with equalisation each having an output of 1 volt from a cathode follower. This is type W.V.A/S.

A heavy mumetal shielded microphone transformer is built in for 15-30 ohms balanced and screened line, and requires only 7 micro-volts approximately to fully load. This is equivalent of 20ft. from a ribbon microphone and the cable may be extended to 440 yds. without appreciable loss.

The 0.5 megohm input is fully loaded by 18 millivolts and is suitable for crystal P.U.'s, microphone or radio inputs.

The playback amplifier may be used as a microphone or gramophone amplifier separately or whilst recording is being made.

The meter fitted for reading signal level will also read bias voltage to enable a level response to be obtained under all circumstances. A control is provided for bias adjustment to compensate low mains or ageing valves.

The power output is 4 watts heavily damped by negative feedback and an oval internal speaker is built in for monitoring purposes.

THE VORTEXION W.V.B. or W.V.A/S

are eminently suitable for making a high quality recording almost indistinguishable from the original since these models have facilities for monitoring the recording actually put on the tape with only a fraction of a second delay.

By this means, when for any reason the signal is distorted or not as required, the result of the recording on the tape can be heard almost instantly, and adjustments can be made until the results are as required.

Many types of music today have the treble boosted considerably, and may result in greater power being recorded at high frequencies than at middle frequencies, an overload of the tape at high frequencies gives a mushy quality with lots of hiss and background noise.

Adjustment to the bias level while listening to the result is useful in this connection especially where the brand of tape and the bias setting for it are not exactly known.

Again if clean treble recordings at 3¾ in. are of prime importance it is now recognised that no other method is quite so effective in achieving this as reducing the bias slightly while listening to the results. The meter reading of the new bias setting for the particular tape used may be noted for future use.

VORTEXION LIMITED, 257-263 The Broadway, Wimbledon, London, S.W.19

Telephone: LIBerty 2814 and 6242-3 Telegrams: "Vortexion, Wimble, London"

QUAD wide range electrostatic loudspeaker

The QUAD speaker uses closely coupled moving elements some two hundred times lighter than diaphragms of moving coil loudspeakers, thus enabling the air to follow the electrical impulses with far greater precision. It is extremely analytical and much of the recent improvement in gramophone records can be directly attributed to the use of these loudspeakers for studio monitoring and quality control.

For the listener in the home "it represents, by a wide margin, the closest approach to truly natural reproduction of sound in the home that we have yet heard". (American High Fidelity H.H. Lab. report, November 1960). *Send for illustrated brochure to Dept. G.*

QUAD for the closest approach to the original sound

ACOUSTICAL MANUFACTURING CO LTD · HUNTINGDON · HUNTS

Introducing the CELESTION

COLAUDIO II

A new era for the discriminating listener

In the constant striving for better sound reproduction the COLAUDIO II represents the greatest step forward since the introduction of the original Celestion COLAUDIO Loudspeaker. Whether it be the top note of a single instrument or a glorious crescendo from a full orchestra, the rich living sound of outstanding realism from the COLAUDIO II (Note-perfect reproduction from 30-15,000 c/s in a cabinet of less than 2 cubic feet) will be appreciated by the most critical music lover.

The COLAUDIO II incorporates a new 12″ Bass unit working in conjunction with an improved version of the already popular HF.1300 Treble unit.

The specially developed enclosure is of simple, yet pleasing appearance, finished in selected walnut veneers that will blend with any decor.

BASS UNIT

A break-away has been made from the usual fabric or paper cone by the use of a moulded diaphragm made from one of the new expanded plastic materials. This enables the unit to reproduce pure tones free from harmonics and avoiding the usual cone break up. Three suspensions are employed to provide a true axial movement and a loudspeaker resonance in free air below 20 c/s.

TREBLE UNIT

This unit is an improved version of the HF.1300 used by Broadcasting and Recording companies and wherever the highest quality treble reproduction is required.

Specification

Frequency Response	30-15,000 c/s
Handling Capacity	15 watts (Peak)
Matching Impedance	15 ohms.

Size:

Height (including Leg)	28½″
Width (across front)	15″
Depth	11½″

Finish: Polished, matched walnut veneers

PRICE £36 . 10 . 0

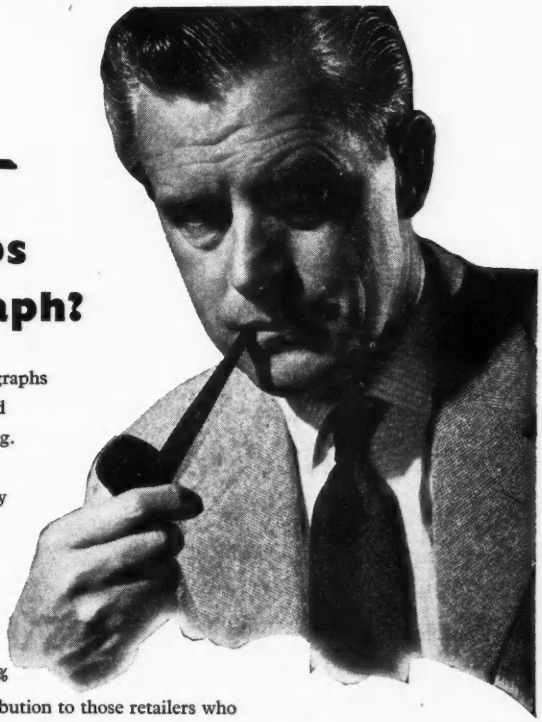
Full details and literature from

Rola Celestion Ltd. FERRY WORKS, THAMES DITTON, SURREY.

Telephone: EMBerbrook 3402/6. Telegrams: VOICECOIL, THAMES DITTON.

Tell me—

Why do so few shops stock the Ferrograph?



A fair question, Sir, and here's our answer. Ferrographs are *not* massed produced. Each is individually assembled by engineers who are dedicated to the art of tape recording. Each instrument must pass the most stringent series of tests it is possible to devise. All this takes time, costs money and inevitably curtails production. But the unswerving adherence to such a bold policy has been largely responsible for creating the fabulous reputation enjoyed today by the Ferrograph throughout the world.

We freely admit that because there are so few Ferrographs available for the home market (last year 47% of our output went overseas) we must limit distribution to those retailers who specialise in Sound Recording and Hi-Fi equipment. For—as we have frequently stated—*Recording* is our business. We have no intention of developing the Ferrograph as a possible competitor to the gramophone.

We believe that those whose needs cause them to choose a high performance instrument like the Ferrograph are much more concerned with quality of reproduction than with short-life narrow gap heads, extreme pre-emphasis, ultra-slow tape speeds, hum bucking and other such artifices. For us there can be no compromise with quality. Should you have difficulty in locating a near-by Ferrograph Dealer, please get in touch with us.

Series 4A

4A/N Two Speeds 3¾/7½ i.p.s. Monaural Recording/Playback. **81 Gns.**

4A/H Two Speeds 7½/15 i.p.s. Monaural Recording/Playback. **86 Gns.**

Stereo 808

Two Speeds 3¾/7½ i.p.s. For use with external Hi-Fi amplifiers and Loud Speakers. The all-purpose machine for Monaural and Stereo Recording/Playback. **105 Gns.**

The Incomparable

Ferrograph

Three Independent Motors · Synchronous Capstan Motor · Recording Level Meter · Brief Stop · Interchangeable Plug-in-Heads · Switched Speed Change with Compensated Correction Network · Separate Tone Controls High Fidelity 2½ Watts Output Stage · Uses 8½" Tape Spools · Gear-Driven Turns Counter · Automatic Switch Cuts Motors at End of Spool · Endless Loop Cassette (Optional Extra)

BRITISH FERROGRAPH RECORDER CO. LTD.

(A subsidiary of the Ferrograph Company Ltd.)

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made to measure

Most good Hi-Fi equipment doesn't come off the peg. It's custom-built to suit the individual (and his pocket). Let the Tape Recorder Centre run a tape around *your* requirements. The Tape Recorder Centre has the largest range of all Hi-Fi equipments, components and cabinets in the country. Expert know-how in matching different units for top performance, and top value. The Tape Recorder Centre will help you to choose just what you need : Choose in person — at the two London Showrooms ; or choose by post — as a first step, get the **NEW 1961 Catalogue, now 88 pages, Free.**

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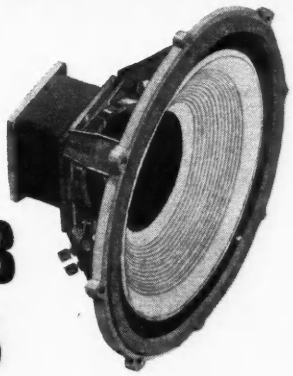
TWO NEW SUPERB BASS UNITS



FITTED WITH LINEAR ROLL SUSPENSION

PRICE **£17.10.0** TAX FREE

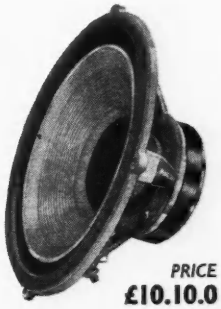
W15/RS

For many years Wharfedale 15" units have set the standard for highest quality bass reproduction due to their low resonance and free suspension. The well-known W15 now becomes available with the latest roll suspension, heat formed from resin impregnated cloth and damped with synthetic rubber. This gives improved linearity and minimum distortion at full volume. At the same time a pressure die cast chassis has been adopted giving improved rigidity and reliability.
The new W15/RS is suitable for use in enclosures down to 4 cubic feet volume.

SPECIFICATION
Fundamental Resonance 23-28 c/s
Frequency Range 25-2,000 c/s
Flux Density 13,500 gauss
Total Flux 180.000 maxwells
1¾" dia. Centre Pole
Copper Voice Coil
Impedance 12-15 ohms only
Max. Input 25 watts (50 W peak)

W12/RS

A 12" bass unit specially developed for use in small enclosures. Very good results are obtainable with cabinet volume down to 1.1/2 cubic feet. Constructional details supplied with speaker. The W12/RS is fitted with a heavy soft fibre cone, which produces exceptionally smooth response, and latest type ceramic magnet. Excellent linearity is ensured by the use of roll surround and special corrugated centring device.



SPECIFICATION
Fundamental Resonance 25-30 c/s
Frequency Range 30-4,000 c/s
Flux Density 14,000 gauss
Total Flux 156,000 maxwells
1.3/4" dia. Centre Pole
Copper Voice Coil
Impedance 12-15 ohms only
Max. Input 15 watts (30 W peak)

PRICE
£10.10.0
TAX FREE

OTHER RECENTLY INTRODUCED SPEAKERS WITH ROLL SUSPENSION INCLUDE TWO FULL RANGE 12" MODELS :

RS/12/DD *SPECIFICATION*
Fundamental Resonance ... ... 25-30 c/s
Frequency Range ... ... 30 c/s-15 kc/s
Flux Density ... ... 14,000 gauss
Total Flux ... ... 156,000 maxwells
1¾" dia. Centre Pole Aluminium Voice Coil
Impedance ... ... 12-15 ohms only
Max. Input ... ... 15 watts (30 W peak)
Price £11.10.0 Tax Free

SUPER 12/RS/DD *SPECIFICATION*
Fundamental Resonance ... ... 25-30 c/s
Frequency Range... ... ...20 c/s-15 kc/s
Flux Density ... ... 17,000 gauss
Total Flux ... ... 190,000 maxwells
1¾" dia. Centre Pole Aluminium Voice Coil
Impedance ... ... 12-15 ohms only
Max. Input ... ... 20 watts (40 W peak)
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Wharfedale
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Chapman Stereo Amp	20 gns.	$60
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DIAMOND STYLUS from £1.4.6 $3 All types (inc. stereo) available.

BINSON "ECHOREC" UNITS

BINSON STANDARD ECHOREC pre-amplifier unit enables echoes to be imposed on signals between microphone (or other source) and amplifier or recorder, 3 channels available, and timing of echoes is controllable. Details on request. 140 gns. $420

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Similar to above but for single channel working. 100 gns. $300

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Whatever you want in tape, Modern Electrics are there to help you with everything from a complete installation to a few inches of leader tape. *S.A.E. brings comprehensive list.*

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Brenell Mk. V	64 gns.	$192
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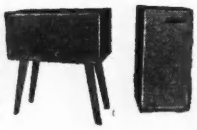

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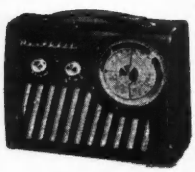

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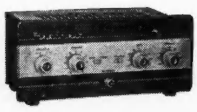

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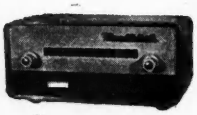

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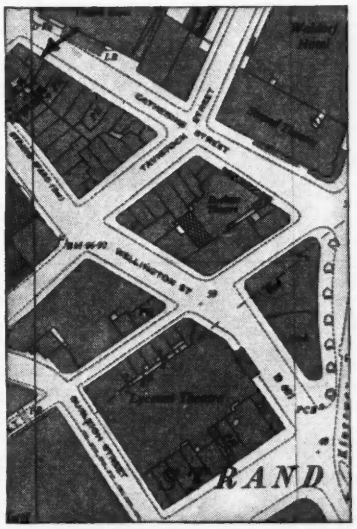

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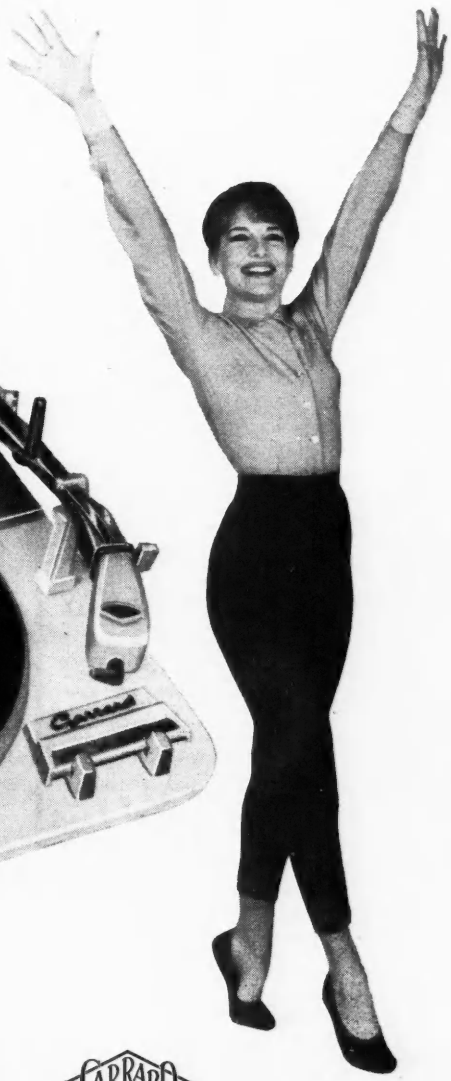

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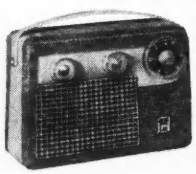

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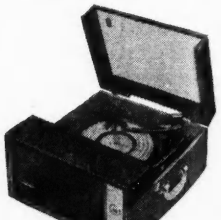

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QUARTERLY REVIEW

THE GRAMOPHONE AND THE VOICE

By DESMOND SHAWE-TAYLOR

The new Tristan

I HAVE found it unusually difficult to keep a clear head over Decca's new and resplendent stereophonic set of *Tristan und Isolde*. Old stagers like myself who loved opera and singing and the gramophone before stereo or LP, or even electric recording was born, like to think ourselves immune from purely sonorous excitements: that is, aware of them and grateful for them, but always far more deeply concerned with quality of interpretation than with mere splendour of sound. "Hier gilt die Kunst", as Hans Sachs said: in this column Art is what matters. And yet, another operatic quotation also comes to mind: poor Sophie, doing her best to remain calm and level-headed before the glamorous arrival of the Rosenkavalier, and failing . . . "denn das ist ja so schön, so schön".

The sheer sound in this new *Tristan*, especially that of the Vienna Philharmonic under Georg Solti, is so beautiful that it bowls one over, not only at a first hearing, but at a second and third. You put on the beginning of the second act to impress a visitor with your stereo equipment and with the marvels of the hunting horns winding away out of earshot through the Cornish night—and before you know where you are your eyes are blurred by the matchless beauty and poetry of Wagner's conception. Heavens, how the score of *Tristan*, thus reheard in all its flooding richness and colour, makes the new music of our own day sound small and prim! Such passion and intensity of emotion, combined with such perfection of form on the largest scale, are both humbling and exalting: nothing like this has surely happened in our own time. It is Olympian, no less.

In such a mood, it is more than usually difficult to do what the faithful and conscientious record critic is supposed to do; that is, soberly to compare, act by act, point by point, the two great versions of *Tristan* that are now in competition: the new Decca issue and the Flagstad/Furtwängler H.M.V. set of 1953. Properly speaking, an act of one version should be immediately followed with the same act of the other; but only those who have ever attempted so unnatural a feat can know what a psychological barrier there is to turning straight back from the flourish of those arrival trumpets at the end of Act I to the questioning 'cellos that begin the Prelude; or from the utter finality of the Liebestod to the tossing and turning of poor wounded Tristan on his bed of pain. Gritting my teeth, however, I have made the effort; and with results that many, I am sure, will hotly dispute.

Broadly speaking, for the actual music itself—the thrilling interplay of motive and colour over the whole wide expanse of the Wagnerian orchestra—the new Decca set is an easy winner. Furtwängler's *Tristan* was beyond doubt one of the greatest achievements of a great though uneven conductor, and the recording—a good one of its day—has been further clarified by recent tape-transfers since its original issue; moreover, our Philharmonia Orchestra played very splendidly for him. Nevertheless, again and again a straight comparison between the two sets reveals a wealth of subsidiary detail which is fully audible for the first time in the new Viennese set. Because of this extraordinary clarity, the new records can be listened to without aural fatigue at a high level of volume, whereas at a similar level the earlier set comes to produce the aural equivalent of glare.

Birgit Nilsson is already an Isolde in the great line. While I was abroad last autumn, I read with some amusement that she had cut up rough because one of my colleagues, in an otherwise favourable notice, had opined that she was "not yet a perfect Brünnhilde". If that report was really accurate, I fear for her sense of proportion; and I am obliged to say, with all respect, that she is not yet the perfect Isolde. What she is, beyond any doubt, is an Isolde streets ahead of her contemporary rivals. Her tone is beautiful and radiant; her comprehension of the role's myriad subtleties already considerable. What then is still amiss? A certain lack, as compared with Leider or Flagstad, of legato feeling; an occasional tendency to slow up just when the music most needs to surge forward (e.g., at the approach to the two high B's in the Narrative Scene); a periodical failure to give the words their full colour and force; and, especially towards the end, one or two startling deviations from pitch. No doubt by that time a sense of fatigue had descended upon the sorely tried performers and recording staff; all the same, it is hard to see how, at the play-back, conductor and singer could have passed a recurrent tendency to flatness in the Liebestod which culminates in a D sharp on the word "*All*" which is surely a semitone below pitch. For the greater part of the first act, however—that is to say, the essential "Isolde" act—Nilsson is magnificent.

It sometimes happens that the superb orchestral recording is achieved at the expense of the voices. Goodness knows, we are glad to say good-bye to the inartistic old boosting of the singer as against the orchestra; but have not Decca sometimes gone too far in the other direction? With both principals there is a recurrent failure to let us feel the body, presence and fullness of the vocal tone; and, to tell the truth, I don't feel, after two playings, that I am sure what the sound of Fritz Uhl's Tristan would be like in the theatre. He is not a singer whom I know at first hand; and much of his performance here, especially during the prolonged agonies of the third act, is patently gramophonic, microphonic, or whatever you like to call it: that is to say, it is a sound that we feel to depend on mechanical amplification, a sound that could hardly be thus produced in the live theatre. That Uhl is a sensitive tenor, and not the usual bull-necked ranter, is evident, and welcome; yet there is something artificial about the impact made by his performance as a whole.

Here let me say that I view with slight misgivings the delicate though perceptible claims of the Decca staff and conductor that they are somehow giving us something more wonderful and genuine than we could ever hope to hear in a theatre—more wonderful, even (as Solti says at one point in the accompanying "rehearsal" disc) than Wagner himself can ever have heard. Thank you very much, I wanted to say, but it will be quite enough if you give us as

good a *Tristan* as *has* been heard, often enough, in a real theatre: say, with Mahler or Nikisch or Toscanini in command, and with a cast composed of Fremstads and Terninas and De Reszkes (both) and Schumann-Heinks. Regina Resnik's Brangaene being by some way the weakest feature of the Decca set, it does not perhaps matter so terribly that her notes come through in a muffled sort of way in the "Einsam wachend" passage, on which the recording engineers and conductor particularly preen themselves; but how cross we should have felt had the singer been Onegin or Olszewska! And it is a pity that the orchestra itself at this point dwindles into a pale and disappointing "atmospheric effect". "The harps are a bit too strong", says someone in the rehearsal disc, but I felt the opposite: I missed the normal impact, as we hear it in the theatre, of those envious streaks of approaching day across the velvet night-sky.

Tom Krause as Kurwenal and Arnold van Mill as King Mark are highly musical and intelligent singers, though both seem a shade young for their roles. Indeed, the fact must clearly be faced that, on purely vocal grounds, the older H.M.V. set has a clear advantage in almost every particular. Flagstad, still in superb voice and with her incomparably sure-footed musicianship, gives a performance that can only be called classical; Suthaus is not a great Tristan, but very warm and very "real"; Fischer-Dieskau is a much stronger and more definite Kurwenal, and Blanche Thebom, though again (as it happens) the least effective member of the cast, is a considerably steadier and more reliable Brangaene than Miss Resnik.

Yet, when all this is said and admitted (or hotly denied, as the case may be), we come back to the sheer sound of the Vienna Philharmonic under the inspired direction of Solti. I have mentioned one great moment of their playing, the departing hunt of Act 2; even more thrilling is the entire scene of the arrival of Tristan's ship in Act 3. Full marks to Decca for having routed out in Bayreuth an instrument of the real Alpenhorn type preferred by Wagner for this moment: its raw, rustic, penetrating sound lends an intense excitement to the scene, and will make it hard for us to accept again the more tame and civilised *cor anglais* normally used. In sum, what can one say? If you are rich enough, or extravagant enough, have both *Tristan* sets in the house; they are in a sense complementary, and each will give you long hours of delight. But if one set it must be, then the "hi-fi" man will get one of the thrills of his life from the Nilsson/Solti (until the next technical marvel supersedes it), while the pure musician will find in the Flagstad/Furtwängler a source of more lasting joy.

Turandot and Ariadne

Everything suggested that the new R.C.A. *Turandot*, with Nilsson, Björling and Tebaldi in the principal roles, would be what it is generally reckoned to be in the United States: namely, by long opds the best available set of Puccini's final masterpiece. At the end of the first act, despite some weakness in the Rome chorus, I was disposed to find it so myself, so splendidly did Björling sing his music, and so finely did Erich Leinsdorf achieve the sweep of the big ensemble that leads up to the fatal striking of the gong. With Act 2, I regret to say, a certain disillusion set in. The Trio of the Masks sounded under-characterised, and the great scene of the riddles lacked its proper tension and thrill. Mme Nilsson has the voice that can ride fearlessly over the fearful hurdles of this role; but where are the bite and menace in her tone? It may well be that she is now giving (since her triumph in the new Metropolitan production of the opera) a more compelling interpretation than this. It is certainly a joy to hear her sail up to those high A's and B's without a trace of the stridency and heavy tremolo of Callas at these points; on the other hand, Callas's shaping of the earlier part of the big aria is far more imaginative and varied in tone-colour (note, for a single example, how her change of timbre on the last note of the phrase "Principessa Lou-Ling" seems to evoke the remote, distant epoch of the event on which she has ceaselessly brooded). Björling is never less than admirable, and at "Il mio nome non sai", with its prefiguration of the "Nessun dorma" theme, he sings with haunting intensity; but it cannot be claimed that his defiant and heroic moments have the thrilling sound of Decca's more vulgar del Monaco, who (in Mosco Carner's highly perceptive phrase) "sings the part with the air of a dare-devil". No doubt the new R.C.A. is, after all, the *Turandot* to settle for; though it is so by a much narrower margin than I had anticipated.

The new *Ariadne auf Naxos* set, which also comes from R.C.A. and is conducted by Leinsdorf, comes up against the very stiff competition of Columbia's Viennese album, against which I feel that it honourably loses. If only it were pressed in straight sequence (do people really use automatic changers for their precious stereo sets?), I should have suggested that the keen Strauss fan might buy the first record alone, for the sake of Sena Jurinac's moving and gloriously sung Composer, one of the finest interpretations of our time; but as it comes in automatic sequence only, one would have to buy two-thirds of the set, leaving a hole in the middle, which would be absurd. Unfortunately Leonie Rysanek, who seems often to disappoint us on records, is no match for Schwarzkopf in the title role; and, although Roberta Peters makes a very good shot at Zerbinetta, the unsteadiness of Miss Peters's high notes makes Rita Streich decidedly preferable. Above all, Karajan secures far more delicate and flexible orchestral playing in the Columbia set.

Verdi and Berlioz Requiems

Again, the R.C.A. set of the Verdi *Requiem*, with the Vienna Philharmonic under Fritz Reiner, has been saluted in America as easily the best of modern versions; and again I am unable to agree. It is a splendid recording indeed, with magnificent playing, choral singing and a fine though uneven quartet of soloists (Rosalind Elias, the mezzo, is no match for the radiant soprano, Leontyne Price; nor is Tozzi the equal of Björling). But what puts the set out of court, for me (as for A.P., with whose review I am in full agreement), is the absurdly slow tempi and defective rhythmic sense of the conductor. In the opening movement, taken at such a pace, he achieves the impossible, and turns Verdi into a bore—the sort of boring sham-solemn composer with whom one is always longing for the next note; and, what is more, he brings off this feat only by dint of flagrantly ignoring Verdi's intentions. His most successful movement—one of the few taken at a reasonable tempo—is the *Agnus Dei*.

H.M.V.'s Roman set, under Serafin, is less imposingly recorded and chorally less impressive than the R.C.A., but is far more sensibly paced, and has a better-balanced group of solo singers. Fiorenza Cossotto, in particular, is a tower of strength in the very important mezzo music; and Christoff shows more grip and character, as well as a much firmer rhythmic sense, than Tozzi in the bass role. Eugenio Fernandi, with a more youthful ring to his voice than the veteran Björling, does the most artistic work I have yet heard from this tenor on records; and Shakeh Vartenissian makes a most promising début as the soprano, offering clear and pleasing tone, and even that almost forgotten luxury, a quite presentable shake.

It is nice (even though dull for the reader!) to find myself for once in such close agreement with previous reviewers, and in the matter of the Boston R.C.A. set of the Berlioz *Requiem* I can endorse every word of D.S.'s verdict. This is an excellent set, unquestionably the one to have, and marred only by a lack of power (and sheer numbers) in the thoroughly efficient and musical chorus. The Boston Symphony is its magnificent self, and the famous chords for three flutes and eight trombones in the *Hostias* sound really beautiful. Why, by the way, did Berlioz, when repeating this strange effect in his *Agnus Dei*, add a fourth flute to bridge the huge gap between treble and bass? It doesn't make so much difference; but I don't recall seeing the point discussed in any of the Berlioz studies I have read.

As for the Oiseau-Lyre *Enfance du Christ*, I can hardly believe that any listener or critic can fail to agree that we have here a supremely beautiful version of one of Berlioz's loveliest scores. The performance is virtually identical with that which Colin Davis lately conducted, to universal acclaim, at the Bath Festival; and in these records, as at Bath, he has inspired the most loving delicacy and accuracy of touch in his orchestra, chorus and soloists. It must have been almost as difficult for the recording engineers as for the singers to capture these immensely prolonged hushed *pianissimi* at the end; but the result is ravishingly beautiful. I cannot think of anything which will do more to spread the love of Berlioz than these two discs.

Further Choral Masterpieces

A quarter already rich in choral issues has also seen the publication of definitive versions of two English choral masterpieces: Walton's *Belshazzar's Feast* and Britten's *Spring Symphony*. Columbia's *Belshazzar*, with the Philharmonia Chorus and Orchestra under Walton himself, first appeared in mono form 18 months ago; but this is a score which needs stereo, and the excellent stereo issue further emphasises the all-round superiority of the new version over either of its LP predecessors.

Britten's score is an addition to the catalogue, and a most welcome one: in fact, it has long amazed me that so popular a piece, just the right length for LP, has eluded us. There are those who find the music uneven, but I fiercely disagree, and am confirmed in my admiration by this glorious recording, both technically and musically among the best things the gramophone has given us. The music is not difficult for any open-minded listener to enjoy, for it is filled with the composer's ecstatic response to the manifold beauties of springtime, of innocence and of eager, larky youth; but it is in many respects a tricky work to bring off in the concert-hall, and in fact I cannot recall a live performance which revealed the many-coloured textural beauties of the score so cleanly and transparently. Such a performance, and such a recording, were worth waiting for. Under Britten's clear beat the Covent Garden Chorus and Orchestra give exemplary interpretations, as do Jennifer Vyvyan and Peter Pears; but in the contralto part, especially in the setting of Auden's "Out on the lawn", Norma Procter occasionally makes a somewhat clumsy effect. The small but important contribution made by the boys of the Emmanuel School, Wandsworth, demands special mention: their singing and whistling bring out all the high colour and radiant happiness of the joint setting of Peele's "When as the rye" and Clare's "Driving boy"—a brief movement that one always longs to encore in the concert-hall, and now we can! Such frank delight in the natural world has become very rare in our time, and seems to link Britten's imaginative response with that of Haydn 150 years before.

H.M.V.'s new version of *The Creation* is very enjoyable, and excellently sung by its three soloists and the St. Hedwig's Cathedral Choir of Berlin. I have not been able to make a detailed comparison between this new issue and the earlier D.G.G. Berlin version with the same choir under Markevich, nor have I heard the latter in either of its re-issued forms—as a four-sided mono set (which seems a good bargain) or as a six-sided stereo (the H.M.V. issue occupies six sides in either form). But, speaking from memory, I fancy that Seefried's singing of the soprano solos for D.G.G. was a shade fresher and more vernal than that of the highly cultivated Elisabeth Grümmer on H.M.V., whereas H.M.V.'s Josef Traxel is somewhat sweeter-toned than Richard Holm. Between the two basses, Gottlob Frick (H.M.V.) and Kim Borg (D.G.G.), there can be little to choose; both are very good. I feel fairly confident, however, that Markevich drew more delicate sounds from the Berlin Philharmonic, especially from its fine wind players, than are to be heard from H.M.V.'s Berlin Symphony Orchestra under Karl Forster.

Mme Grümmer turns up again as the ideal Bach soprano in a fine Leipzig version of the great *Wachet auf* Cantata (No. 140) under Kurt Thomas (H.M.V. mono ALP 1828, coupled with the slightly less interesting Ascension Cantata, *Lobet Gott*, No. 11). The first movement of *Wachet auf* is built on that noble tune so often heard in a piano transcription, against which the Leipzig choirboys sing their *canto fermo* with a ringing solidity of tone which it does one's heart good to hear. Another outstanding pleasure of this record is the superlative art and tone of the solo oboist.

Two One-Acters

New versions have appeared of two one-act operas, each of which is ideally suited to the gramophone and rather hard to manage on the stage. One of these is Manuel de Falla's puppet opera, *Master Peter's Puppet Show*, based on an episode in *Don Quixote*. The Ducretet-Thomson version of this brilliant little piece having vanished some time ago, the new Decca set under the lamented Ataulfo Argenta, at present available only in stereo (SXL2260), is most welcome. Orchestrally it is very good, and vocally fair enough: I like Julita Bermejo as the boy who rattles off the romantic story, but should have preferred a smoother baritone than Raimunde Torres for Don Quixote's closing scene. The coupling is again *El amor brujo;* would not the late Harpsichord Concerto have made a more appropriate choice?

Ravel's animal and inanimate opera, *L'Enfant et les Sortilèges*, might well be called a discovery of the gramophone, which has now recorded it three times. Before the issue of the first (in many respects still the best) of these versions—namely, the deleted French Columbia 78's which have never appeared here in LP form—we were often assured, even in standard books about the composer, that the work could be written off as a failure, aesthetically as well as practically. In fact, Colette's enchanting libretto suited Ravel's gifts to a nicety; the work is touching, amusing, fragile and in its way perfect. In Lorin Maazel's new version for D.G.G., the stereo sound is superb, and the general "realisation" outstandingly successful; all the same, it is not easy to decide between it and Ansermet's Decca version. Some of the episodes are better in the one, some in the other; both are excellent as a whole. Sylvaine Gilma, a new name to me, sings four high soprano parts (Fire, Princess, Nightingale, Owl) with pure tone and in a very exact and musicianly style; Michel Sénéchal makes an amusing "Monsieur Arithmétique" and tough-guy Wedgwood teapot; the two cats stick very close to the written note-values, and sound wonderful; and the little choral episode for the wallpaper shepherds and shepherdesses is particularly well managed. As the Child, Françoise Ogéas does her little solo excellently, and is elsewhere good, though not outstanding; but Camille Maurane's Grandfather Clock cannot erase (any more than could Pierre Mollet on the Decca issue) the unforgettable performance of Yvon le Marc'hadour in the old Columbia set.

The Cetra Catalogue

Cetra's extensive operatic catalogue, though notoriously uneven in point of performance and of recording technique, is far too valuable to lose; and it has been disconcerting, these past few years, to see it constantly vanish and reappear, both here and in America, like the Cheshire Cat. One never seemed to know just what could be obtained, and what could not. Now that the English distribution has passed into new and energetic hands, let us hope that a period of greater stability has arrived.

The available issues are divided into the LPC series, which sell at the normal 39s. 9d. price, and the OLPC series (also known as "Opera Club") which is down to the more attractive level of 22s. 6d. per record. I cannot help feeling that sooner or later all these sets, which are often eight or ten years old, will logically have to be repriced at the lower rate; more especially since such amenities (thus regarded by many companies, though to me they are essential) as texts and translations are not supplied, even with the more expensive sets. But there are a good many ardent Verdi fans who will not jib at the chance of acquiring *any* of his otherwise unrecorded operas, of which there are no fewer than six in the present Cetra list: *Un Giorno di Regno*, *Nabucco*, *I Lombardi*, *Ernani*, *La Battaglia di Legnano* and *Luisa Miller*. I suppose there is a fair chance that one of the larger companies will one day tire of endlessly re-recording *Aida* and *Rigoletto*, and produce a more starry version of *Nabucco*, and conceivably of *Ernani*. The remainder may well have to wait another decade before they are recorded again, and are therefore well worth our attention: libraries, especially, ought to have a complete set of these issues. I have found the *Giorno di Regno* recording, with some delightful singing from Pagliughi and Oncina, to be especially rewarding; the music, as a recent London performance showed, is much better than it is said to be in the standard biographies.

All these rare Verdi sets unfortunately belong to the more expensive series, the bargains being normally the operas of which more glamorous versions are otherwise to be had. But the Cetra *Sonnambula* (an OLPC set) still seems to me, with its delicate performances from Pagliughi, Tagliavini and Siepi, far more enjoyable than the Columbia set with Callas. Cetra's similarly cast *Rigoletto*, by the way, which I also continue to find the best of all, remains (exceptionally) among the LPCs. Contrariwise, a number of unfamiliar operas, such as *Adriana Lecouvreur*, *Fedora* and *Francesca da Rimini*, are to be found in the OLPC series; but consideration of these must be postponed for another quarter.

Meanwhile, will not Ricordi make some arrangements to distribute in this country their reputedly excellent and strongly cast sets of Paisiello's *Barbiere di Siviglia* and

Rossini's *Il Cambiale di Matrimonio*, for which I feel sure that there would be a small but definite sale among our many operatic enthusiasts?

Some Notable Recitals

Not for the first time, I find myself positively gasping at the Niagara-like productivity of Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau, who seems to turn out as many LPs as a popular singer of the previous generation, such as Elisabeth Schumann or John McCormack, would produce 78s. His gramophone vogue is the more extraordinary because this vast output consists mainly of Lieder, and often of highly unfamiliar Lieder at that. One might imagine that he spent most of the year at recording sessions, or in preparation for them; in point of fact, he travels and concertizes on a prodigious scale, besides appearing frequently in opera —a field in which we have yet to make his acquaintance in this country.

Of the half-dozen or so Fischer-Dieskaus that have turned up since my last article, I will postpone consideration of his latest Schubert disc (part of a still continuing series) and pass quickly over two others. One of these is an interesting collection of Haydn's German and English songs on H.M.V. Ⓜ ALP1829 which certainly "fills a gap", as they say, and is most carefully and artistically done, yet never bowls one over with the delight of a fresh discovery, as did Elisabeth Schumann's enchanting little disc of *She never told her love* and the *Sailor's Song*. The other is his D.G.G. collection of Schumann's Spanish and *Myrten* songs (Ⓜ LPM18655: Ⓢ SLPM138655), which contains some very sensitive performances on the latter side, as well as some remarkable semi-comic displays of vocal flexibility on the side devoted to the Spanish songs. But really, our old friend Schumann dressed up to kill in toreador pants and gypsy ear-rings, with a knife gripped between his gleaming teeth, is one of the minor curiosities of music!

Fischer-Dieskau breaks fresh ground in another D.G.G. disc (Ⓜ LPM18590, Ⓢ SLPM138058) called "Songs of the Late Romantics", and devoted to Strauss (three unfamiliar Goethe songs from his Opus 67), Mahler (four songs) and Pfitzner (nine songs). Though, of course, all these composers *are* late Romantics, the title may seem a shade misleading, since so many of the Strauss and Mahler songs are ironic, didactic or frankly humorous in character. However, that may be, there are some glorious things in this record, among them a perfect account of Mahler's *Fish-Sermon of St. Anthony of Padua* and a most moving *Zu Strassburg auf der Schanz*, noteworthy for Karl Engel's inspired playing of the soft quasi-military trills in the bass. This performance, with its quiet, ironic pathos, makes me look forward to the day when the same singer gives us some of Mahler's great orchestral military songs, such as *Der Schildwache Nachtlied* and *Revelge*—indeed, it is surprising that these have eluded his all-embracing grasp for so long. The Pfitzner group is interesting and distinguished, and will help to make friends for a little-known Lieder composer who was not lacking in self-confidence, since he set *Das Verlassene Mägdelein* (after Wolf) and *Therese* (after Brahms)! By far the most striking is the visionary *Hussens Kerker* ("Jan Huss in prison"), here interpreted with a haunting intensity and serenity of mood. Fischer-Dieskau's H.M.V. recital of Verdi arias (Ⓜ ALP1825: Ⓢ ASD407) is a remarkable achievement which it would be interesting, if space allowed, to examine in detail. Much of it is very good, yet there is a recurrent failure (especially at final cadences) to suggest the real Italian style; for instance, the baritone moves too rapidly from the *mezzo-forte* level to a sort of *mezza voce* (e.g., on the high G of "Il balen") that really belongs to another world; he does not find it easy to maintain a true *piano* or *pianissimo*.

I have often felt that Fischer-Dieskau's fame has unfairly obscured the great virtues of Gérard Souzay: whereas the German singer's invasion of French territory (as in Fauré's *La Bonne Chanson*) can be called no more than honourable, the Frenchman often shows an almost equal mastery in the world of German Lieder. Philips have just issued Souzay's third (and, I feel inclined to add, definitive) attempt at Schumann's *Dichterliebe* on Ⓜ ABL3369, sung with masterly insight and unfailing beauty of tone and very finely accompanied by Dalton Baldwin; it has the advantage of being complete on a single side, and thus finds room for ten admirably chosen Schumann songs on the reverse, including the lovely and uncommon Lenau settings of Opus 90. Even more valuable (because there is no recommendable alternative) is a companion Souzay-Baldwin version of *La Bonne Chanson* with nine miscellaneous Fauré songs on the reverse (Ⓜ ABL3371). There are a few small criticisms that can be made of this record: an occasional want of sparkle in the pianist's treatment of Fauré's arpeggios (perhaps he pedals them too heavily?) and a touch of his old tendency to underweight the bass line; on the part of the singer, some failure to give full value to the composer's characteristic alternations of *p* and *f*, or of *pp* and *ff*, in the final pages of certain songs. There were moments, too, when I found his French enunciation to be, surprisingly, a shade less scrupulous than his German. But I unhesitatingly commend the performance for its mastery of mood and colour, its sensuous beauty, its energy where that quality is needed, and its rare distinction of mind. As for the music . . . I cannot understand those people who keenly explore the obscurest realms of German Lieder, yet contrive to remain blissfully ignorant of songs so subtle and delicate as these.

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★ *indicates a stereophonic recording*

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ANALYTICAL NOTES AND FIRST REVIEWS

By

ROGER FISKE . JOHN FREESTONE . EDWARD GREENFIELD . TREVOR HARVEY
PHILIP HOPE-WALLACE . MALCOLM MACDONALD . JEREMY NOBLE
ANDREW PORTER . ALEC ROBERTSON . LIONEL SALTER . DENIS STEVENS
ROGER WIMBUSH

ORCHESTRAL

BACH. The Musical Offering, BWV-1079 (ed. Boyling). **Yehudi Menuhin** (violin) and members of the **Bath Festival Chamber Orchestra** (with Elaine Shaffer, flute, Archie Camden, bassoon continuo, and Kinloch Anderson, harpsichord). H.M.V. Ⓜ ALP-1839: Ⓢ ASD414 (12 in., 30s. plus 9s. 9d. P.T.).

S.C.O., Münchinger (9/55) Ⓜ LXT5036: (7/60) Ⓢ SXL2204
Soloists, French Nat. R.O., Markevich (12/58) Ⓜ 33CX1590
Ars Rediviva Ensemble (12/60) Ⓜ SUA10072

Until now Bach-lovers have been able to choose between two reliable versions of *The Musical Offering:* Münchinger's for chamber orchestra, and the Ars Rediviva for soloists. In the same category as the Supraphon disc comes an edition by Neville Boyling, played by an excellent group of musicians whose interpretation of this work is familiar to those who heard it at last year's Bath Festival. Although some may find that the austerity of Bach's canons is lessened to some extent by orchestral participation, there is no doubt that, when played by fine soloists, the music makes a direct and personal appeal which cannot be underestimated.

The canons and canonic fugue are played by Yehudi Menuhin, Elaine Shaffer, Archie Camden, Kinloch Anderson, and other musicians who took part in the original performances of this version. All play with a keen sense of style, and they infuse the music with lively phrasing and ornament when properly required, so that the listener tends to forget (as indeed he should) that this music is for the most part cerebral and even mechanical. Bach's canons are no less mechanical than those set forth in textbooks of counterpoint, but they are so skilfully contrived that the music counts for infinitely more than the mechanism. The canon in contrary motion and the one in augmenta-

tion and contrary motion are proofs of this, and the deeply felt performances given here show how the music has affected the performers. Kinloch Anderson's playing of the opening *Ricercar a* 3 is masterly: the tempo is just right, and the triplet sections are given their full weight. The final *Ricercar* also comes off well, and is better balanced than the recording by Ars Rediviva. My personal favourite is the Trio Sonata, which is here given a most impressive performance by Menuhin, Shaffer, Anderson, and an unnamed 'cellist (? Derek Simpson). The nobility and pathos of the slow movements and the sleek, finely controlled *fioriture* of the two Allegros are all brought out as I have never heard them before, and the recorded sound, especially in stereo, is remarkably lifelike.

The musical text differs very little from that given in Hans David's excellent edition (Schirmer). There are however differences in instrumentation (which Bach did not always specify) and a different solution to the four-part canon. In each of the five groups of canons, one change in order has been made. In his notes Mr. Boyling maintains that in view of the Bath performances "a new edition had to be prepared. Not only was it necessary to establish an acceptable text but also to devise some symmetrical method of treatment". I see nothing unacceptable in David's edition, which is a classic of its kind; nor do I understand why David is acknowledged to be the first to become aware of the work's symmetry, although his edition is ignored. Nevertheless, Mr. Boyling's version is perfectly satisfactory and he is well served by his musicians. D.S.

BACH. Harpsichord Concertos. (*a*) Concerto in C major for two harpsichords, BWV1061; (*b*) Concerto in C major for three harpsichords, BWV1064; (*c*) Concerto in A minor for four harpsichords, BWV1065. **Sylvia Marlowe** (harpsichord, *a*, *b*, *c*), **Pamela Cook** (harpsichord, *a*, *c*), **Robert Conant** (harpsichord, *b*, *c*), **Theodore Saidenberg** (harpsichord, *b*, *c*), **Baroque Chamber Orchestra** conducted by **Daniel Saidenberg.** Brunswick (M) AXTL1094: (S) SXA4003 (12 in., 30s. plus 9s. 9d. P.T.).

*BWV*1064 *and* 1065 *coupled:*
Eisner, Noll, Goebels, Spilling, Stuttgart P.M., Reinhardt (4/55) PL8670

A leaflet fell out of a magazine I was reading this morning, and on it was a remarkable series of thinly veiled hints, from numerous players and collectors of harpsichords, that a sixteen-foot stop is an unwanted anachronism. Early harpsichords were of course very simple affairs mechanically, with only the choice of two or three qualities of sound, and even two-manual instruments were sometimes restricted in timbre. Modern instruments, on the other hand, are often supplied with a sixteen-foot register which does a great deal towards creating a noble and sonorous effect in *fortissimo*, besides (on at least one make of harpsichord) offering the player a velvet timbre as a solo register in its own right. There is, in other words, nothing wrong in having a harpsichord with a sixteen-foot stop. The wrong comes only from a player who misuses it by bringing it in on every possible occasion and thereby making the instrument bottom-heavy from a tonal point of view.

Both the old Vox record and this new Brunswick suffer from over-use of the sixteen-foot register. When three or four harpsichords are used, the impression given to the listener is not unlike that of a herd of stampeding elephants, and when the recorded sound is at an absurd level (as in the Brunswick disc) the only solution is to move into an adjacent room. Turning the volume down is no help, since the orchestra, already overwhelmed and stifled, disappears even faster than the offending jangles. By going into another room one feels at least that distance lends enchantment, and even if the balance is wrong the playing of the soloists is a solace. Brunswick's four soloists are far more vigorous and crisp than Vox's, and the ornaments are executed more cleanly and accurately. But their tempo is sometimes less effective than it might be, and Bach's counterpoint sounds either confused because of speed or lagging because of sloth. Reinhardt manages the tempi fairly well, on the other hand, and what one wishes in the end is a performance given by the Brunswick soloists, conducted by Reinhardt, and on the evidence here produced recorded by neither Brunswick nor Vox, but by some company with a sound engineer capable of solving correctly all the problems inherent in balancing four harpsichords with a small string orchestra. I wish I could recommend the new issue, but it is impossible to do so wholeheartedly. Even the stereo, which I expected to sound better than the mono, hardly improves on it at all; indeed at one point near the end of the first movement of the C major Concerto for Two Harpsichords, there is a very poor tape-join which destroys Bach's beautiful figuration. D.S.

BERLIOZ. Symphonie Fantastique, Op. 14. Paris Conservatoire Orchestra conducted by **Constantin Silvestri.** H.M.V. (M) XLP20036 (12 in., 16s. 11½d. plus 5s. 6½d. P.T.).

Bargain comparisons:
Concertgebouw, Beinum (3/52) (M) ACL27
Berlin P.O., Otterloo (1/55) (5/60) (M) GBL5547
Czech P.O., Zecchi (11/60) (M) PLP131: (S) PLPS131

Even as an inexpensive issue, this cannot seriously compare with the recording by van Otterloo, easily the best of the three listed above. Silvestri is up to his old tricks. The score is either pulled out of shape, or else pushed out of shape, and there is no magic left, nothing evocative or poetical. The introduction, for instance, can set (or mar) the atmosphere of the entire work: here it goes for almost nothing. The orchestra produces a cold kind of sound, and the playing is matter-of-fact in the extreme. D.S.

Dr. Walter Betcke

The International Federation of the Phonographic Industry, at a recent conference held in Copenhagen, unanimously elected Dr. Walter Betcke, Director of Deutsche Grammophon G.m.b.H. Hamburg, as their new President.

BRAHMS. Piano Concerto No. 1 in D minor, Op. 15. Claudio Arrau (piano), **Philharmonia Orchestra** conducted by **Carlo Maria Giulini.** Columbia (M) 33CX1739: (S) SAX2387 (12 in., 30s. plus 9s. 9d. P.T.).

Selected comparisons:
Backhaus, V.P.O., Boehm (2/54) (R) (M) LXT5364
Kempff, Dresden Orch., Konwitschny (1/58) (M) DGM18376
Graffman, Boston S.O., Munch (11/60) (M) RB16217: (2/60) (S) SB2040
Gimpel, Berlin P.O., Kempe (1/60) (M) XLP20010
Katchen, L.S.O., Monteux (4/60) (M) LXT5546: (S) SXL2172

This is a serious competitor for the fine Katchen/Monteux version which D.C. praised highly last year, though frankly you would not gather that from the opening. The tutti under Giulini's direction is decidedly low-powered where Monteux is at his finest, as D.C. said, in "long-spanned expressive phrasing and rich sonority". Monteux makes one remember the description of this concerto as a symphony with piano, where Giulini, not only in the tutti but throughout the first movement, is far less compelling. It is left to the soloist to try to redress the balance, and fine as Arrau undoubtedly is he scarcely outshines Katchen. Arrau makes it clear from the opening phrases that he is deliberately seeking a cooler interpretation than Katchen. There is an immaculate precision with notes phrased or detached very clearly and generally with less rubato than Katchen. Arrau is at his finest in the delicious, sparkling passage which leads into the recapitulation, yet if you compare that passage with the Katchen you will note not so much that Katchen is slicker, less pointed, but that Monteux shapes it all so much more confidently that on balance one prefers the Decca performance.

In the slow movement, as D.C. noted, Katchen lacks a sense of hushed serenity, fine as his playing is, and I find much the same deficiency with Arrau. This is very beautiful but has not the intensity that Serkin's deleted performance had, for example. Arrau is magnificent, however, at the climax of the movement with really big, authoritative tone, and at the opening of the finale also many will prefer his muscular, clear, unrushed playing.

But throughout my comparisons I have continually returned to the Serkin performance and found it more vital and more naturally poetic than all the current rivals, the last movement taken at staggering speed but still wonderfully crisp and pointed. I cannot conceive why Philips withdrew it, and perhaps they will consider reissuing it in one of their cheap label series—or for that matter at full price—as the recording is still very acceptable. In the meantime the Gimpel cheap-label version is highly competitive with a clear-fingered, more obviously light-weight performance—the sort of performance one expects from Kempff but which Kempff fails to give in his D.G.G. disc. Kempe's accompaniment for Gimpel is stylish and on the whole I enjoy this as much as any current version with the possible exception of the Katchen. I have yet to hear the stereo version of the new Arrau. The mono is forward and rather dry with good piano tone. E.G.

A NEW FLAGSTAD RECORD

A new record by KIRSTEN FLAGSTAD appears this month — a record of **Hugo Wolf Lieder** (M LXT 5329). Any new issue by this great soprano is headline news, and this is perhaps more than ever so this month as this particular disc is the last of the present series of recordings by Madame Flagstad which were, so to speak, 'in stock'. This does not necessarily mean that there will be no more recordings by one to whose name the adjective 'incomparable' so naturally attaches itself. Needless to say, Decca, as much as any of her countless individual admirers, hopes that more recording may be done with her.

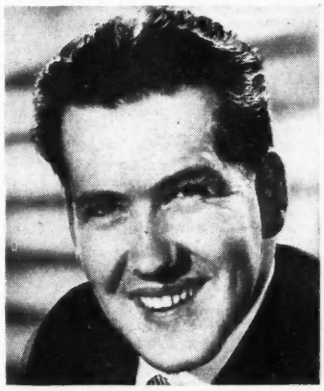
Kirsten Flagstad, who was born at Hammar—some seventy miles north of Oslo—likes to regard her proper début as having taken place in 1917. She sang at Bayreuth in 1933 and 1934 and it was only when she went to America to sing Sieglinde that her true worth was recognised. (Her Sieglinde in Act I of *Die Walküre* has been recorded under Hans Knappertsbusch on S SXL 2074/5 M LXT 5429/30.) She made her London début in 1936 and returned the following year, but the war kept her from Covent Garden after that until 1948.

In 1956 she sang Brünnhilde in a series of broadcasts of *Götterdämmerung* and this production constituted her first Decca recording (M LXT 5205/10). Kirsten Flagstad then recorded Brünnhilde in Act III of *Die Walküre* with Solti conducting (S SXL 2031/2 M LXT 5389/90). This was the first major exploitation of Decca's production techniques in opera recording, and the completely new concept of recording opera evolved from these techniques was first fully displayed in *Das Rheingold* (S SXL 2101/3 M LXT 5495/7) for which Madame Flagstad specially learned the part of Fricka.

But of course her repertoire is far from being confined to Wagner. In the fifteen years 1919-1933 when she was singing mainly in Oslo she tackled a tremendous variety of music, and now two of her most delightful records are those of Sibelius songs (M LXT 5444) and Songs from Norway (S SXL 2145 M LXT 5558). By normal standards the records mentioned here would represent a fair recorded output for one artist in only five years, but to Kirsten Flagstad to live is to sing, and fortunately for all there are several more records, full details of all of which can be obtained from dealers.

FROM MOZART TO PRESLEY

KENNETH MCKELLAR is by most people associated with light music but in fact is much more widely talented.



He lives with his Swiss wife and 23-months old son in Scotland and, of course, is justly famed for his LPs of Scottish songs such as **Songs of the Hebrides,** which is released only this month (S SKL 4137 M LK 4399), *The Tartan* (S SKL 4101 M LK 4354), *Roamin' in the gloamin'* (S SKL 4034 M LK 4295) and *The songs of Robert Burns* (M LK 4318). In fact, this fame has recently spread even wider as a result of 30,000 records which the Scottish Distillers' Company has had made up with an advertising message on one side and McKellar's *My love is like a red, red rose* on the other. One of these was given at the British Trades Fair in Moscow to Mr. Krushchev who appeared highly delighted.

But his early training was entirely classical, and an interesting link with last month's column is that Joan Sutherland's first appearance on an English stage was singing Pamina to his Tamino in the Royal College of Music's Opera School. Right at the opposite end of the scale, Kenneth McKellar enjoyed impersonating Elvis Presley in *A wish for Jamie*—a new type of Scottish pantomime written especially for him last year and so successful that it has achieved the unique distinction of being re-booked at the same theatre for next winter.

What little spare time Kenneth McKellar has he spends writing or driving his Mercedes-Benz 220S.

On record he has added to the LPs already mentioned a very fine one of Handel songs and arias (S SKL 4121 M LK 4380) made with The Covent Garden Orchestra under Sir Adrian Boult. So great has been the success of this album that reports from 'usually reliable sources' have it that when Decca re-records *Messiah* Kenneth McKellar will be the tenor soloist.

ADVERTISER'S ANNOUNCEMENT

A PAGE OF HISTORY

Reissues upon 45 r.p.m. records of some of the greatest singing of the "Golden Age":

B 2. **DE LUCA:** A tanto amor (*Favorita*). Il balen (*Trovatore*).
DE LUCA & CORRADETTI: Cheti Cheti; Aspetta, cara (*Don Pasquale*).
B 3. **LITVINNE:** Air du sommeil (*L'Africaine*). Pleurez mes yeux (*Le Cid*).
MAUREL: Mandolinata. Le rondel de l'adieu.
B 4. **ESCALAIS:** Je veux encore entendre (*Jerusalem*). Asile hereditaire (*Tell*). Ah parais (*Le Mage*). Dieu m'eclaire (*La Juive*).
B 5. **DE LUCA:** A te o cara; Vieni fra questa (*I Puritani*). Sogno suave; Cerchero lontana (*Don Pasquale*).
B 6. **DE LUSSAN:** Habanera (*Carmen*). Le tribute de Zamora. Garde la souronne. Styrienne; Connais-tu le pays (*Mignon*).
B 7. **ANCONA:** Un di m'era (*Chenier*). Sei vendicata (*Dinorah*). Prologo (*Pagliacci*). Serenade (*Don Juan*).
B 8. **ARNOLDSON:** Ah fors'e lui (*Traviata*). Addio del passato. Leise, leise (*Freischutz*). Helas l'oiseau (*Manon*).
B 9. **BATTISTINI:** Deh non plorar (*Il Demone*).
KASCHMANN: Ode'verd'anni miei (*Ernani*).
GIRALDONI: Amleto Brindisi.
AMATO: Queste dunque (*I due Foscari*).
B10. **LEHMANN:** Ich wahle mir den Munt'ren (*Cosi*). Brief Duett, (Lilli) Nun soll ich; Heilge Quelle (*Figaros Hochzeit*). Martern aller Arten (*Entfuhrung*).
B11. **DELMAS:** La Patrie-Air du pauvre martyr.
PLANCON: Chant du chasseur (*Pardon de ploermel*).
NAVARINI: Vi ravviso (*Sonnambula*).
DE RESZKE: Infelice (*Ernani*).
B12. **McCORMACK:** Thora. Oft in the stilly night. Like Stars above. The Lord is my light.
B13. **BATTISTINI:** Largo al factotum (*Barbiere*). Il mio Lionello (*Martha*). Su questa rose (*Dannazione*). Perche tremar (*Zampa*).
B14. **VIGNAS:** Sopra Berta (*Il Profeta*).
ANSELMI: Va godendo vezzoso (*Serse*).
ESCALAIS: Sicilienne (*Robert le Diable*).
DALMORES: Ah si ben mio (*Trovatore*).
B15. **DESTINN:** "Geh", sprach sie (*Robert der Teufel*).
MEI-FIGNER: Lullaby (*Harold*).
ABENDROTH: Ein unnennbares Sehnen (*Troubadour*).
MANTELLI: Brindisi (*Lucrezia Borgia*).
B16. **PLANCON:** Allons, jeunes gens (*Romeo*). Vallons de L'Helvetie (*Le Chalet*). Le Lazzarone. Le Caid-Air du Tambour-Major.
B17. **PLANCON:** Le veau d'or; Serenade de Mephistopheles (*Faust*). Canzone del porter (*Martha*). Chi mi dira. L'etoile du Nord. O jours heureux.
B20. **DE LUCIA:** Son geloso (*Sonnambula*). Prendi l'anel. Tardi si fa (*Faust*). Obbligato, Obbligato (*E'Elisir d'amore*).
B22. **SOBINOFF:** Arias (*May Night*). Snowmaiden (*Eugene Onegin*).
B23. **BONCI:** Stanotte ho fatto (*Tess*). Il sogno e la coscienza.
DE LUCA: Ferito, prigionier (*Germania*). La Dama di picche. Se all'egual.
B26. **TETRAZZINI:** Regnava nel silenzio; Quando rapita (*Lucia*). Brahma gran' dio (*Prescatori*). Siccome un di.
B28. **TAMAGNO:** O muto asil; Corriam, corriamo (*Tell*). Sopra Berta (*Profeta*). Inno (*Re del ciel*).
B30. **CARUSO:** Je crois entendre encore (*Pescatori*).
McCORMACK: Il fior che avevi (*Carmen*).
BONCI: Paride ed Elena. O de mio dolci ardor.
ANSELMI: Una vergine (*Favorita*).
B32. **DE LUCIA:** Come ruggiada (*Ernani*).
SEMBRICH: Ernani involami (*Ernani*).
BATTISTINI: Vieni meco; Lo vedremo (*Ernani*).
B34. **BONCI:** Arias (*Favorita, Pasquale, Elena ed Paride, etc.*).
B35. **SCHUMANN HEINK:** Brindisi (*Lucrezia*). Parto, parto (*Clemenza*). Scene de la Prison (*Orphete*).
B37. **RUFFO:** O vin discaccia; Come il romito fior (*Hamlet*). O veglia o donna (*Rigoletto*). Le minaccie (*Forza*).
B39. **SAMMARCO:** Non piu andrai (*Figaro*).
RENAUD: Serenade (*Don Juan*).
SLEZAK: Konstanze dich wiederzusehen (*Entfuhrung*).
HESCH: O wie will ich triumphieren (*Entfuhrung*).
B40. **McCORMACK:** Questa o Quella (*Rigoletto*).
GILLY: Pari siamo (*Rigoletto*).
CARUSO: La donna e mobile; Quartette (*Rigoletto*).
B42. **SLEZAK:** Arias (*Prophete, Lakme, Queen of Sheba*).
B43. **ARRAL:** Polonaise (*I Lombardi*).
RUFFO: Per mi giunto (*Don Carlos*).
BONINSEGNA: Ma dall'arrido (*Un ballo*).
GILLY: O sommo Carlo (*Ernani*).
B45. **DE LUCA:** Sei vendicata (*Dinorah*). Di Provenza (*Traviata*). Pari siamo (*Rigoletto*). Come il romoto (*Amleto*).
B46. **ANCONA & JOURNET:** Suoni la tromba (*Puritani*).
HEMPEL & JADLOWKER: Nicht Zweifeln (*Daughter of the Regiment*).
CORRADETTI & DE ANGELIS: Io son, signor Grazie al cielo (*Fra Diavolo*).
B47. **ZENATELLO:** Mal reggendo; Di quella pira (*Trovatore*). Non sai tu; O qual soave (*Un Ballo*).
B51. **ZENATELLO & CANNETI:** Vogliatemi bene; Via Dall'anima (*Butterfly*). Nei cieli bigi; O Mimi tu piu non torni (*Boheme*).
B52. **ZENATELLO:** Vieni. No! pazzo son guardate (*Manon Lescaut*). Mattinata. Cielo e mar (*Gioconda*).
B53. **PATTI:** Batti, batti (*Don Giovanni*). Jewel Song (*Faust*). Ah? non credea (*Sonnambula*). La Serenata.
B54. **RUFFO:** Meriggiata. E canata il grillo. E la mia dama. Non pense a lei.
B57. **HEMPEL:** Ardon gl'incensi (*Lucia*). Der Holle Rache kocht (*Zauberflote*). Nein, ich singe nicht (*Billet de Lotorie*). Einst Klagte II.
B60. **SAMMARCO:** Adamaster re delle acque (*L'Africana*). Brindisi (*Otello*). Pescator (*Gioconda*). Weep not my child (*Il Demonio*).
B61. **RUSS:** Figlio del sol (*L'Africana*).
SAMMARCO: Adamaster re dell'acque (*L'Africana*).
DE LUCIA & DE ANGELIS: O Selika (*L'Africana*).
PICCAVER: O Paradiso (*L'Africana*).
B63. **BONCI:** Fra poco; Tu che a dio (*Lucia*). Il fior che avevi (*Carmen*). La Violetta.
B64. **ESCALAIS:** O toi mon seul (*Trovatore*). Supplice in fame. Arretez o mes freres (*Samson et Delila*). O Paradis (*L'Africana*).
B65. **TAMAGNO:** Deserto sulla terra; Di quella pira (*Trovatore*). Quand nos jours; Adieu vains objets (*Herodiade*).
B66. **TAMAGNO:** Figli miei v'arrestate (*Samson*). Esultate; Ora a per sempre addio; Niun mi tema (*Otello*).
B68. **PICCAVER:** Deserto in terra (*Don Sebastiano*). Spirto gentil (*Favorita*). Parmi veder (*Rigoletto*). Tu che a Dio spiegasti (*Lucia*).
B69. **DE LUCIA:** Il mio tesoro (*Giovanni*).
CAPPELLI: Flower Song (*Carmen*).
GILION: Beviam (*Prophete*).
PAOLI: Re del cielo (*Prophete*).
B70. **ANSELMI:** Io sono come nube (*Le Maschere*). Il fior che avevi (*Carmen*).
EAMES: Le Chanson des Baisers.
GILIBERT: Les Rameaux.
B73. **BURZIO:** Me pellegrian; Madre pietosa (*Forza*).
RUSS: Ritorna vincitor, I sacri nomi (*Aida*).
B74. **GILION:** O muto asil (*Tell*). O Paradiso (*L'Africana*).
ZENATELLO: Figli miei v'arreatate (*Samson*). Il fior che avevi (*Carmen*).
B75. **GARBIN:** E lucevan (*Tosca*).
CAPPELLI: Addio alla madre (*Cavalleria*).
PAOLI: Si fiu soldato (*Chenier*).
PICCAVER: Recondita armonia (*Tosca*).
B76. **RUSS:** Spunta l'aurora (*Mefistofele*). Addio del passato (*Traviata*). Donde lieta usci (*Boheme*). In quelle trine (*Manon Lescaut*).
B78. **RUFFO:** Veglia o Donna; Miei sigori perdono; Si vendetta; Lassu in ciel (*Rigoletto*).
B79. **BATTISTINI:** Alla vita (*Un ballo*). Eri tu che macchiavi. O Lisbona; La ci darem (*Don Sebastiano*).

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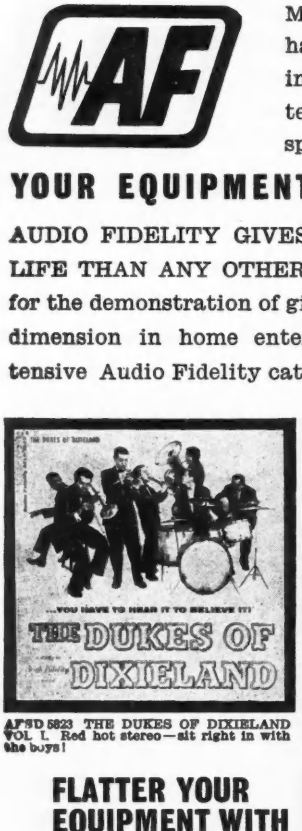

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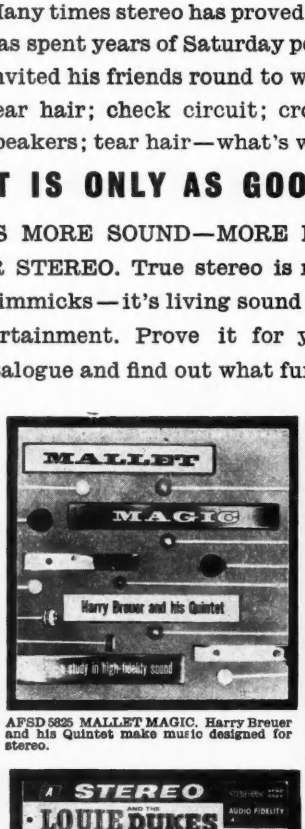

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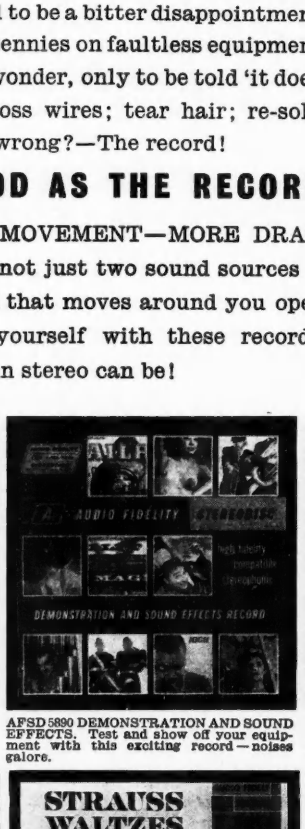

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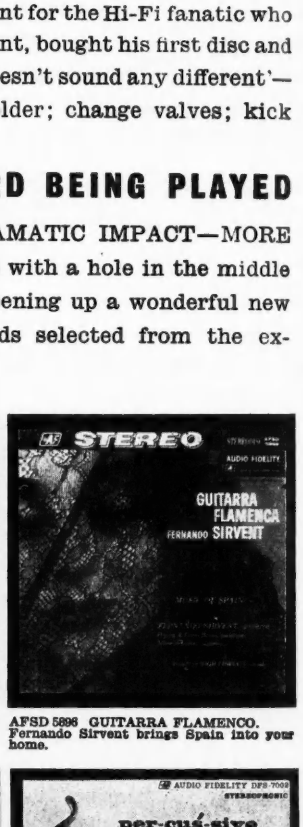

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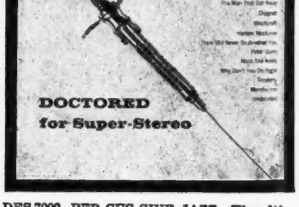

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BRAHMS. Symphony No. 3 in F major, Op. 90. Academic Festival Overture, Op. 80. Philharmonia Orchestra conducted by **Otto Klemperer.** Columbia (S) SAX2351 (12 in., 30s. plus 9s. 9d. P.T.). Mono: 33CX1536 (6/58).

Selected comparison:
Columbia S.O., Walter
(M) (2/61) ABL3343: (S) (2/61) SABL133

I had not heard Klemperer's performance of the Third Brahms before and, now that I have, I cannot say that I take to it. The first movement is made grand, but without warmth and humanity; in the second, on the other hand, the interpretation sometimes even inclines to the sentimental; the next is laboured, the finale doesn't take fire. There are, too, mannered touches here and there throughout the symphony that do not appeal to me. And how odd, in a lively performance of the *Academic Festival Overture*, suddenly to take a more deliberate speed at the bassoon tune (which Brahms marked *animato!*). To judge from this one performance this is not Klemperer's symphony in the way that some other symphonic masterpieces are—and in the way that it does belong to Bruno Walter. (In case I should be thought biased, let me add that when it comes to the Fourth Brahms I would more likely want Klemperer.) However, most readers probably know enough about Klemperer by now to judge whether they are likely to agree with me or not.

What is most ungrateful is the sound of this record. The mono wasn't good, but this stereo is really coarse, especially in the first movement. The quiet middle movements don't offend the ear and somehow the finale sounds comparatively agreeable. It is very clear in detail (aided by the clarity of playing Klemperer always gets), but I could take no pleasure in listening to an orchestral sound of the kind provided by the first movement here. This is something one rarely has to say of an E.M.I. record and I wonder if it is partly due to the way Klemperer balances his orchestra. The very opening chords, for example, are full of oboes, whereas one thinks usually of predominating brass tone. However, whatever the reason, there it is.

If you must have this performance of the symphony, then I would suggest the mono record, even if you are stereo equipped. Otherwise, Walter is a clear recommendation in every way. With a symphony that is much recorded one cannot usually make so definite a decision, but Walter's performance (well recorded) stands head and shoulders above the rest. T.H.

DEBUSSY. Prélude à l'après-midi d'un faune. Petite Suite.
RAVEL. Valses nobles et sentimentales. Le Tombeau de Couperin. Detroit Symphony Orchestra conducted by **Paul Paray.** Mercury (S) AMS16066 (12 in., 28s. 6d. plus 9s. 3½d. P.T.). Mono: MMA11119 (11/60).

This is Paray at his best. Not only is the music French, it is mostly bright and extrovert and his performance of the *Valses nobles et sentimentales*, in particular, is one that I have enjoyed repeatedly since I first had it in its mono version. Not that the more sensuous *L'après-midi d'un faune* is any less than very satisfying; in fact, the only thing I don't enjoy on the whole two sides is the spiky playing of the *Forlane* in the suite, *Le Tombeau de Couperin.*

The orchestral playing throughout is as brilliant as we have come to expect from the Detroit orchestra. The stereo recording now spreads the sound more as in a live performance and is good to listen to. Altogether, a much recommended collection of French music. T.H.

BRUCH. Kol Nidrei, Op. 47.
LALO. 'Cello Concerto in D minor.
SAINT-SAENS. 'Cello Concerto No. 1 in A minor, Op. 33. Pierre Fournier ('cello), **Lamoureux Orchestra** conducted by **Jean Martinon.** D.G.G. (M) LPM18669: (S) SLPM138669 (12 in., 30s. plus 9s. 9d. P.T.).

Bruch:
Machula, Hague P.O., Otterloo (6/60) (M) ABE10179
Lalo:
Cassadó, V.P.M., Moralt (5/60) (M) PL10920
Saint-Saëns:
Starker, Philh., Giulini (2/59) (M) 33CX1579
Cassadó, V.P.M., Moralt (5/60) (M) PL10920
Rostropovich, U.S.S.R. R.O., Stolyarov (3/61) (M) MK1503

Though far from wee, sleekit or timorous, I admit I cowered at the harsh metallic snarls which assailed my ears at the start of these two concertos. I shut the window, took up an *en garde* position, and tried again; I twiddled knobs desperately; I moved from mono to stereo and back again; I called in witnesses; I gave up. So far as acceptable recording standards are concerned, only *Kol Nidrei* here emerges with credit, the orchestra in this being mostly very quiet; and as there is (I was surprised to see) only one other version now on the market, and that a poorly-recorded one, this new arrival, played with dignity and without undue emotionalism, is clearly in the lead. In the stereo version, however, (though not in the mono) there is a slight unsteadiness of pitch in the last few bars. But as nobody is likely to buy a twelve-inch disc for the sake of *Kol Nidrei*, the main considerations must be the two concertos.

Cassadó's light tone helped to make his reading of the Lalo particularly refined and restrained: his is a polished performance, though somewhat cool and uncommitted. Fournier is more impassioned and eloquent in the declamatory passages, more expressive in the slow movement, and more rhythmic in the delightful *Allegro presto* dance section, with its highly original scoring for flutes. Were it not for the horrid recorded sound of the orchestral tuttis, this would be most recommendable.

Finding a completely satisfactory Saint-Saëns is a problem. In this new issue Fournier is at moments slightly below his best form; and the recording is really nasty. Starker is too maudlin altogether whenever a lyrical subject appears; the Russian version listed above, though distinguished by beautifully sensitive playing by Rostropovich, is so lo-fi as to cause only exasperation; the Vox is the most pleasant recorded sound, but Cassadó distorts the rhythm of the opening and indulges in far too much skittery passage-work. It makes the deletion of the excellent Columbia version by Rostropovich and Sargent the more inexplicable and the more deplorable. L.S.

DVORAK. Slavonic Dances: Op. 46, Nos. 1-8; Op. 72, No. 7. **London Symphony Orchestra** conducted by **Jean Martinon.** R.C.A. (M) RB16246: (S) SB2115 (12 in., 30s. plus 9s. 9d. P.T.).

These are no run-of-the-mill performances. Martinon obviously likes the music and has thought hard about it, and the result is a delightful record. I think myself that he takes Nos. 1 and 5 just too fast; in the first of these the orchestra sounds a little desperate here and there, while in the A major the conductor has to slow down rather unconvincingly in the middle to make one passage possible. Nevertheless most of the playing is sizzlingly good, and very exciting. I especially liked No. 6 which Martinon takes a little slower than most conductors. He pulls the time about quite a lot in this as in most of the other dances, but his changes of tempo always sound musical, and they are needed in music such as this. The recording quality is outstandingly good, and the stereo somehow manages to be even more vivid than the mono. There should have been room for at least one more dance on each side, but otherwise I strongly recommend this record. R.F.

DVORAK. Symphony No. 9 in E minor, Op. 95, "From the New World". Concertgebouw Orchestra conducted by **Antal Dorati.** Philips (M) ABL3309: (S) SABL161 (12 in., 30s. plus 9s. 9d. P.T.).

Selected comparisons:
Philh., Galliera (10/54) (M) 33SX1025
N.B.C. S.O., Toscanini (3/55) (9/58) (M) RB16116
V.P.O., Kubelik (3/57) (M) LXT5291: (10/58) (S) SXL2005
Philharmonia, Malko (9/57) (M) CLP1125
Berlin P.O., Kempe (12/58) (M) ALP1623: (12/60) (S) ASD380
V.S.O., Ančerl (3/59) (M) CFL1024
Bamberg S.O., Hollreiser (6/59) (S) STPL10810
Los Angeles P.O., Leinsdorf (3/59) (M) P8454: (12/59) (S) SP8454
Berlin P.O., Karajan (5/59) (M) 33CX1642: (12/59, (S) SAX2275
Chicago S.O., Reiner (6/59) (S) SB2081
Hallé, Barbirolli (1/60) (M) CCL30155
Philh., Sawallisch (1/60) (M) 33CX1677: (4/60) (S) SAX2322
Columbia S.O., Walter (3/60) (M) ABL3291: (9/60 (S) SABL152
Hamburg P.O., Schüchter (3/60) (M) XLP20014
L.P.O., Rignold (4/61) (M) GGL0067: (S) GSGL10067
Detroit S.O. Paray (5/61) (M) MMA11132
Berlin P.O., Fricsay (10/60) (M) LPM18627: (S) SLPM138127

Dorati and the Concertgebouw, hitherto unrepresented in the transatlantic passenger-list, add a vigorous and well-rounded performance to the several good ones already available to choose from. The sound is impressive, as usually in the Concertgebouw, and the balance (apart from minor flaws) comes very near to being top-class. Dorati, no stranger to the New World, leaves little room for sentimental slackenings of speed, preserving instead a forward pulse that carries the listener along with it, disarmed and unrepentant. It takes a better than average conductor to disarm criticism, and an exceptionally good one to convince the listener that tiny flaws must be ignored in the production of a real "take"

as opposed to a multitude of edited snippets. This performance sounds to me genuine and honourable. If there is a fluff here and there from a horn or a violin, it seems to matter little beside the drive of Dorati's interpretation.

The second flute seemed occasionally over-reticent in the first movement, where basses too appeared woollier than later on in the work. In the Largo, the cor anglais plays in a really reedy manner, very intense yet well-controlled and nicely phrased. The solemn brass chords could have done with a fraction less from the two trumpets: they stick out instead of blending as they should. An odd effect may be heard in the Scherzo, where the reiterated timpani figure, written as three notes, sounds like four or five. Right at the back of the orchestra, his sound-waves have farther to travel and more time to rebound. I didn't notice this fault in the Fricsay performance, still among the best half-dozen. Dorati allows the Trio section to dance along at a convenient pace instead of forcing it *à la* Paray, and the resulting clarity shows it to be well worth the effort, for it is an effort to get some orchestras to relax. I liked Dorati's sensitive touches in the finale, too, where quieter passages can sometimes be sacrificed for the noisier ones. Sawallisch, gives a beautifully shaped performance, and if you like sensitive playing, his is high on the list. But this new version by Dorati is solid and imposing both in mono and stereo. D.S.

HAYDN. Symphonies. No. 94 in G major, "Surprise"; No. 103 in E flat major, "Drum-Roll". **Philharmonia Hungarica** conducted by **Antal Dorati.** Mercury (S) AMS16085 (12 in., 28s. 6d. plus 9s. 3½d. P.T.). Mono: MMA11139 (5/61).

The slight dryness of sound that I mentioned in reviewing the mono version of this disc last May is quite absent from the stereo; the quality of the recording is excellent, in fact. If this coupling of symphonies happens to be the one you want it is probably a safe recommendation, though I still feel there is a certain lack of lilt in the first movement of the *Drum-Roll* and a rather exaggerated pomposity in its minuet. J.N.

KABALEVSKY. Romeo and Juliet, Op. 55. U.S.S.R. Radio Symphony Orchestra conducted by **Dimitri Kabalevsky.** MK (M) MK1546 (12 in., 30s. plus 9s. 9d. P.T.).

This is neither ballet nor incidental music, but a set of eight "Musical sketches to the tragedy by W. Shakespeare". *Romeo and Juliet* is, I suppose, the most phonogenic work in all literature. Love, hate, duels, dances, Queen Mab, the holy friar, the final grave Tomb Scene—they go straight into music, as Bellini, Berlioz, Gounod, Tchaikovsky, Prokofiev and Suttermeister—to name only a few—well knew. Kabalevsky's *Romeo and Juliet*—it consists of ten numbers—in places quite strongly recalls Prokofiev's: particularly in turns of phrase in the "Quick Dance", No. 5, that precedes the "Lyrical Dance" telling of the meeting of Romeo and Juliet. The latter dance is a long melody unwound over a soft but heavy oom-pah bass ostinato—at once effective in its suggestion of an idyll that blossoms over a tragedy, and oddly unambitious in its musical scope, conventional in its procedures. For the most part this *Romeo and Juliet* is warmly romantic in vein, neo- (and simpler) Rachmaninov, often suggesting the Malcolm Arnold of *Homage to the Queen* more closely than any other composer. The "Scene on the Square", No. 8, is vivid in its portrayal of the cut-and-thrust of the duels, even if at the same time one has the impression that Kabalevsky has simply made for the highest common factor of this kind of activity music. Yet it is all effective, skilful and enjoyable to listen to. Kabalevsky can invent tunes, and command effective instrumental colour. The "Procession of the Guests" is the only number touched with dullness.

My copy was a little prickly to begin with, but cleared up. Some of the solo playing (notably an oboe in No. 9, "Romeo and Juliet"—presumably the bedroom scene) is exquisite. It is obviously a fine performance, reasonably well recorded. A.P.

KHACHATURIAN. Gayaneh Ballet —excerpts.

TCHAIKOVSKY. Francesca da Rimini, Op. 32. Leningrad Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by **Gennadi Rozhdestvensky.** D.G.G. (M) LPM-18673: (S) SLPM138673 (12 in., 30s. plus 9s. 9d. P.T.).

Gayaneh excerpts: Sabre Dance; Lullaby; Variation de Noune; Dance of the Highlanders; Gayaneh's Adagio; Dance of the Young Curds; Dance of the Young Maidens; Lesghinka.

Rozhdestvensky achieves the most convincing performance of *Francesca da Rimini* that I can remember, and he does it largely by cutting down on the hysteria and going all out for the pathos. All too often conductors slog their way through the score as though they were afraid it wasn't going to sound exciting enough, but the music is far more effective when the excitement is left to take care of itself. So far as a restrained performance is possible, this is one. The long central section is taken rather slower than usual and sounds ravishingly lovely; the clarinet solo is a marvel of control and beauty, but all the playing is tremendous, notably the horn calls earlier on. Sometimes there is some fiddling with microphones, and on both mono and stereo the bassoons are allowed a far-from-realistic prominence here and there, while the strings do not have quite the fulness of tone that they have in reality. I had an opportunity to compare Rozhdestvensky's *Gayaneh* with the composer's, recorded with the Philharmonia in 1955 on Columbia mono 33C1041, and though the Columbia is six years old, the orchestral sound is more vivid and exciting. There seems to be no established suite from this full-length ballet, and Rozhdestvensky offers two numbers that do not seem to have been recorded before: the rather enjoyable Variation danced by Noune and the unhappily translated "Dance of the Highlanders"; no Scottish influence should be expected. Incidentally the sleeve-note on this ballet is the sort one writes with no knowledge of the music and only a very small dictionary of music to rely on; that on the Columbia disc is a model of its kind. Those who have this version can rest assured that it has not been bettered. Rozhdestvensky did not convert me to these rowdy, hectic, brainless dances. But he did convert me to *Francesca da Rimini*, a work I usually find over-repetitive, over-hysterical and boresome. On this record it sounds a masterpiece. R.F.

KREJCI. (*a*) **Divertimento for flute, clarinet, trumpet and bassoon.** (*b*) **Serenade for Orchestra.**

NOVAK. (*c*) **Serenade in D major, Op. 36.** (*a*) Members of the **Czech Philharmonic Orchestra,** (*b*) **Czech Philharmonic Orchestra** conducted by **Karel Ančerl,** (*c*) **Brno State Philharmonic Orchestra** conducted by **Bretislav Bakala.** Supraphon (M) SUA10086 (12 in., 30s. plus 9s. 9d. P.T.).

Before himself becoming a professor at the Prague Conservatoire Vitezslav, Novák was a favourite pupil of Dvořák; and though he died as recently as 1949 not all of his music is readily distinguishable in idiom from that of his teacher. The Serenade for Small Orchestra of 1905 would have been heard by Dvořák certainly without alarm, and probably, in view of the skill and beauty of the writing, with great pleasure. A *Prelude, Serenata,* and *Nocturne*—equally euphonious and unassuming—are resolved in a finale which is said to have satiric intentions. But if it does so they are hardly realised; the music seemed to be quicker than that of the earlier movements—and by then rather happily so—but certainly no fiercer; the shade of Dvořák would have been unruffled even here.

Satire seems more the province of Isa Krejci, in turn a one-time pupil of Novák. His Divertimento of 1925 squeezes four movements into five minutes, each of them having just enough time to allow an exploration in brittle but well-balanced sound of various sectors of the periphery of diatonic jokes. Not all listeners will agree in finding either beauty or humour here; but few of them, surely, will grudge the work its five minutes when it is to be succeeded on the disc by the Serenade for Orchestra of 1950. For here Krejci's music sparks into vigorous life in a degree seldom associated with a serenade; indeed the first movement builds up to such a rousing climax as rather to overshadow the finale. Separating them is a slow movement which uses rather liberally a luscious style of string writing which belongs more usually in another place; but if this upsets the strings of the Czech Philharmonic they do not show it.

Indeed they and their colleagues are on their toes—and need to be!—throughout this Serenade, giving it an excellent performance from every point of view. The other works on the disc fare equally well in this respect. But all alike share also the defect of a recorded sound which is distinctly on the dull side. This does little

harm to the Divertimento, whose instrumentation could all too easily sound excessively brilliant, and perhaps not very much to the Novák; but it does prevent the Krejci Serenade from having the brilliant effect such an orchestral showpiece should undoubtedly have in a performance as good as this. M.M.

MAHLER. Symphony No. 2 in C minor, "Resurrection". Mimi Coertse (soprano), **Lucretia West** (contralto), **Vienna Academy Chorus** (Chorusmaster: Günther Theuring), **Vienna State Opera Orchestra** conducted by **Hermann Scherchen.** Westminster (S) WST206/1-2 (two 12 in., 60s. plus 19s. 6d. P.T.). Mono: XWN2229/1-2 (5/60).

Cundari, Forrester, Westminster Choir, New York P.O., Walter

(6/59) (M) ABL3245-6: (5/61) (S) SABL189-90

Even without the splendid new Walter stereo recording fresh in the memory, I fear that I can be no more complimentary about this performance than D.C. was when he reviewed the mono issue a year ago. Scherchen's penchant for exaggeration makes the entire work seem utterly ponderous and pretentious—one might bring oneself to accept the inflated last movement eventually, but oh! that dull and pedestrian *ländler* and that sonnambulistic, humourless Scherzo! The intonation of the brass (in the passage at the start of *Urlicht*, for example, and in the fanfares of the finale) is very sub-standard. And the recording, which D.C. characterised as "sadly deficient in bass", is in general no better in stereo: positively scrawny at the beginning, I should have called it. The only exception is some of the apocalyptic thunders in the finale—which however show up the quieter parts, in contrast, as lacking body. In some respects indeed the stereo is actually less satisfactory than the mono: Lucretia West is most oddly balanced for her solo, sounding at first as if she were crooning in an undertone miles from a mike. The best thing still about this performance is the ravishingly pure, cool voice of Mimi Coertse. L.S.

MENDELSSOHN. Symphony No. 3 in A minor Op. 56, "Scotch". Hebrides Overture, Op. 26, "Fingal's Cave". Philharmonia Orchestra conducted by **Otto Klemperer.** Columbia (M) 33CX1736 (12 in., 30s. plus 9s. 9d. P.T.).

Sym. No. 3—selected comparisons:
L.S.O., Dorati (10/59) (M) MMA11048
L.S.O., Maag (12/60) (M) LXT5601: (S) SXL2246

Sometimes a conductor whom one doesn't think of as ranking in the world's first half-dozen pulls off a winner and that is what Peter Maag did in his recording of the *Scotch* Symphony (also coupled with the *Hebrides* Overture). The grave Dr. Klemperer takes an entirely different view of the work which, though it has its own distinction, doesn't seem to me as satisfying. Nor is the Philharmonia here playing at the standard the L.S.O. produced for Maag; nor is the recording, though perfectly adequate, as brilliantly truthful as Decca's. But one can sympathise with the orchestra if they began, as the record does, with this stolid and unimaginative account of the *Hebrides*.

The reading and performance of the symphony are, however, on a much finer level, though as different from Maag as chalk from cheese. Klemperer gives a serious view of the first movement, not so volatile or flexible as Maag—certainly one with which one can sympathise though, as one can also with this performance of the slow movement, but both fast movements are on the slow side. It's true that Mendelssohn qualifies his speed direction for the scherzo by *non troppo*, yet Klemperer is nearer 112 than the composer's 126 and whether you like so restrained and pointed a performance only you can decide, of course. It *is* pointed and it gains a distinction of its own from being treated like this.

But if I can take this, I am much less prepared to take the same sort of view of the finale (where Mendelssohn wrote *vivacissimo* and no qualifications to that at all). Maag and the L.S.O. are particularly brilliant in this movement and if his speeds here and in the scherzo are faster than Mendelssohn suggests, they are only so by a fraction; they *sound* fast because of the light, fleet playing.

The Philharmonia is, as I have said, in better form in the symphony, but even here the nagging persists that they are not on their topmost form in the way of ensemble. It is not that one can pick on many places and say that here is a lapse, it is the feeling that they aren't always listening acutely and playing together in the way the L.S.O. does in the same work. The sort of small point that detracts from one's complete enjoyment is exemplified by the last pizzicato chords of F major in the scherzo, where the second violins' C predominates and the firsts' F is scarcely to be heard. Whose fault that is I do not know—and I know it's a trivial one in itself but somehow I was never able to give myself up to complete enjoyment, with the feeling of certainty that all will be well, that one should get from a really great performance and recording.

The two recordings listed above as worthwhile comparisons are selected partly because they couple the same two works as the disc under review. Dorati possibly falls between the two, not having Maag's very individual sympathy with the symphony nor, on the other hand, having the distinction that marks everything Klemperer conducts, whether it's your choice or not. My own choice is doubtless clear from what I have written above, but I hope I have given a fair impression of Klemperer's approach, so that those who suspect they may prefer it will at least hear bits of it and see what they think. The recording is scheduled to appear in stereo. T.H.

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CLASSICAL LP CATALOGUE
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(see page 103)

MOUSSORGSKY. Night on the Bare Mountain.
RIMSKY-KORSAKOV. Le Coq d'Or. London Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by **Hugo Rignold.** Pye Golden Guinea (M) GGL0077 (12 in., 15s. 10d. plus 5s. 2d. P.T.): (S) GSGL-10077 (12 in., 20s. 9d. plus 6s. 9d. P.T.).

This Golden Cockerel is very good value indeed at a Golden Guinea—and the bit extra for the stereo version is worth it, too. Hugo Rignold conducts a performance both poetical and dramatic and the L.P.O. plays well for him. The *Night on the Bare Mountain* doesn't generate quite all the excitement of one or two others but is still a thrilling account of the piece, with its ending, again, very poetically played. The sound of both discs is good, with the stereo, as usual, certainly the better.

The brief sleeve note gives a précis of the opera's plot but neglects to tell us where the pieces of the Suite come in—the label refers to them simply as First Movement, Second Movement, and so on, which is unimaginative and unhelpful. And having given the background scene to the Moussorgsky piece the note says—"How a composer would come to think of such images from creating a musical work is best explained by historians who note that Moussorgsky was often under the influence of either liquor or drugs". Sleeve notes may be short but they should at least be well written.

Still, this is of comparatively small importance (though one wishes a record company would do the whole job properly), for the record itself is clearly a first-rate bargain. T.H.

MOZART. Serenade No. 13 in G major, K.525, "Eine kleine Nachtmusik". Ave, verum corpus, K.618†. German Dances: K.602, No. 3; K.600, No. 5; K.605, No. 3.
HANDEL. Water Music Suite (arr. Harty). The item marked † with the **Singverein der Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde** and **Philharmonia Orchestra,** the remainder with the **Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra** all conducted by **Herbert von Karajan.** Columbia (M) 33CX1741 (12 in., 30s. plus 9s. 9d. P.T.).

Karajan unashamedly gives a big performance of *Eine kleine Nachtmusik*—a big body of strings recorded in a large, reverberant hall. As usual in his Mozart the approach will strike many as too mannered—particularly the occasional squeezing of phrases in what I call a "toothpaste" effect, as in the trio of the third movement. But calculated rather than truly affectionate as some of these effects sound, Karajan's vitality comes through in every bar and in spite of my reservations I have enjoyed the performance, particularly the very sprightly finale.

The German Dances are altogether fresher, with the bird-whistles and sleigh-bells apparently helping the Berlin players to get rid of all inhibitions. Again big performances considering the pieces, and in the Handel-Harty suite, too, Karajan

deliberately plays up the pomp and circumstance in a very vigorous performance not quite so well pointed as Weldon's (H.M.V. mono XLP20033).

The *Ave verum* is the odd item out, not only as a choral piece, but for being made in Vienna with the Philharmonia and not in Berlin like the rest of the record. I suspect this was something made to fill in a major recording session that finished early. The Singverein sings affectionately, even sentimentally, and is none too well drilled, but quiet, affectionate singing cannot fail to make this piece sound heavenly. The recording of the orchestral items is typical of E.M.I.'s Berlin sessions, warm and reverberant with a fair frequency range. A stereo issue is scheduled. E.G.

MOZART. Piano Concerto No. 24 in C minor, K.491. Rondo in A minor, K.511. Artur Rubinstein (piano), with orchestra conducted by **Josef Krips.** R.C.A. Ⓜ RB16248: Ⓢ SB2117 (12 in., 30s. plus 9s. 9d. P.T.).

Selected comparisons:
Solomon, Philh., Menges (1/56) Ⓜ ALP1316
Gieseking, Philh., Karajan (5/58) Ⓜ 33CX1526
Haebler, V.P.M., Walter (12/58) Ⓜ PL10080
Kempff, Bamberg S.O., Leitner (1/61) Ⓜ LPM18645: Ⓢ SLPM138645
Kentner, Philh., Blech (6/61) Ⓜ XLP20035

There is nothing overtly virtuosic about Rubinstein's Mozart playing. Indeed, if anything it seems to me almost too well mannered and aloof, although at the same time it is a strongly projected performance and not the self-communing kind that Kempff, for example, gives us. What I find lacking in it, however, is the sense of tension, of urgency, that the work ideally demands. This is very largely due to the style of playing Krips obtains from the unnamed orchestra—suave and feline to a degree, but also just a little sluggish in matters of rhythm. I would not necessarily wish for faster tempi, though that of the first movement does seem a little slow, but crisper articulation would have made a lot of difference. Viewed as a whole this is an authoritative performance, but not a very thrilling one—and much the same goes for the A minor rondo, which Rubinstein plays beautifully but with a certain lack of immediacy. The sleeve-note quotes Mozart to the effect that "the player should seem to be the composer", but this is just the thing that Rubinstein cannot persuade us of—nor, to be fair, do I think he tries to. The recording of the piano is excellent in itself, and one can hear a great deal of orchestral detail. All the same I found the general balance too close for a realistic perspective between solo and tutti sections; everything tends to sound just a little too loud for comfort, and turning the volume down is no solution. Still, I should make it clear that the actual quality of the sound is very good indeed, and shows up well beside most of the earlier versions. As for comparisons, Kempff's version is the only other one available in stereo, and although I personally prefer his very introspective approach to the work and also the exceptionally realistic recorded balance, I can well see that it might seem too tame to some people. There are only two cheap versions—Kentner's and Haebler's—and of these the latter is only available as part of a package deal; if you want it separately you have to pay the full price, which brings it into competition with versions by Gieseking and Solomon, as well as the mono of the performances by Rubinstein and Kempff that I have been discussing. In spite of some occasional finicky moments I still think that Solomon's performance of this work wears very well, even though the recorded sound is beginning to show its age. Both he and Kempff offer the A major concerto, K.488, as a coupling, which seems better value than Rubinstein's A minor rondo, but in the long run one's choice must be made on the basis of the performance, and Rubinstein's poised, elegant account of the music is certainly attractive. J.N.

NEDBAL. Ballet Suites. (*a*) From Tale to Tale; (*b*) Andersen. (*a*) **Film Symphony Orchestra** conducted by **Otakar Paříik,** (*b*) **Prague Radio Symphony Orchestra** conducted by **Alois Klíma.** Supraphon Ⓜ LPV490 (12 in., 30s. plus 9s. 9d. P.T.).

Oskar Nedbal (1874-1930) was a pupil of Dvořák's, played the viola in the Bohemian Quartet, and conducted both the Czech Philharmonic and Vienna's Tonkünstler Orchestra. He also composed a great deal of very light ballet music, much of which is still popular in Czechoslovakia. Thus he resembled Messager in that he conducted and performed serious music, but composed only light music. The purpose behind this record is to make his light music better known outside his native land.

The two ballets offered on this disc were written in 1908 and 1913 respectively, and the music must have sounded old-fashioned even then. Like all Nedbal's ballets, these two have fairy-tale plots, *Andersen* having a scenario by the librettist of Dvořák's *Rusalka* based mainly on Hans Andersen's story of the Tin Soldier. Nedbal had a small talent for writing pretty tunes, none at all for descriptive music, and nothing on the disc seems to have much connection with what goes on on the stage. I suppose that if one had been brought up on this very naïve music one would feel indulgent towards it and make allowances, as people clearly do in Czechoslovakia. The basic trouble is a total lack of individuality and I can detect no Czech characteristics. Performance and recording are excellent. R.F.

ROSSINI. Overtures. La Gazza Ladra; La Scala di Seta; La Cenerentola; Il Barbiere di Siviglia; L'Italiana in Algeri; Il Signor Bruschino. **Minneapolis Symphony Orchestra** conducted by **Antal Dorati.** Mercury Ⓢ AMS16090 (12 in., 28s. 6d. plus 9s. 3½d. P.T.). Mono: MMA11006 (4/59).

Neither performance nor recording is as brilliant as one would expect from this conductor and orchestra on Mercury. After Gamba's scintillating collection of Rossini overtures last month, the lack of sparkle here is very noticeable. Sometimes the trouble is that the beat is too rigid, sometimes that the tempo is insensitively chosen (as in the absurdly fast introduction to *Scala di Seta*). The recording is restricted even in the more atmospheric stereo version with the strings given a strangely lack-lustre thin quality as though there were not enough of them. I have perhaps been too hard on what in the concert hall would be considered beautifully rehearsed performances, but the competition in Rossini overtures is particularly fierce and one comes to ask for something more stylish than this. E.G.

STRAUSS, RICHARD. Don Juan, Op. 20. Der Rosenkavalier, Op. 59: Waltz Sequences 1 and 2. **Till Eulenspiegels Lustige Streiche, Op. 28. Concertgebouw Orchestra** conducted by **Eugen Jochum.** Philips Ⓜ ABL3377: Ⓢ SABL201 (12 in., 30s. plus 9s. 9d. P.T.).

Selected comparisons:
Don Juan and Till Eulenspiegel, coupled:
Philh., Klemperer (1/61) Ⓜ 33CX1715: Ⓢ SAX2367
Till Eulenspiegel:
V.P.O., Karajan (4/61) Ⓜ LXT5620: Ⓢ SXL2261

Jochum and the Concertgebouw have recorded *Don Juan* and *Till* before, but the ten-inch disc on which they appeared has now been deleted, and this new one has many advantages. It is a fair recommendation if you want a coupling of *Don Juan* and *Till* with the two *Rosenkavalier* confections thrown in for good measure. Yet neither in performance nor recording does it rank among the very best versions of either piece. Jochum, contrary to what one would expect from so dreamily romantic a Brucknerian, often chooses very fast speeds indeed as at the opening of *Don Juan* and the end of *Till*. The Concertgebouw players cope very well indeed, but one cannot help thinking they

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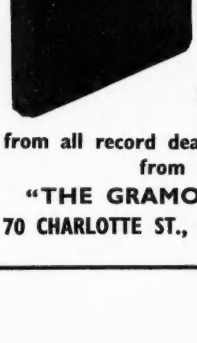

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would have sounded more comfortable if rushed less. All the way through *Till* there is extra point and polish in Karajan's wonderful recent version, and this comparison (with Klemperer a third contestant) has confirmed me in my superlatives for Karajan the other month. In the passage where Till dresses up as a monk and again in his love-making Jochum sounds rather flat. *Don Juan* is better, with the love music achieving a nice balance between the rigid and the sentimental, but the great trombone calls are disappointingly backward. One's disappointment is partly explained by the unambitious recording—stereo only marginally more atmospheric than mono—which pales when compared with Karajan's for *Till* or even Klemperer's. Klemperer will obviously be the choice for those who like his severe, unsmiling approach (more impressive in *Don Juan* than *Till*), but why has Fontana still not brought out from the recesses of the special list Szell's hard-driven but very exciting coupling of both works together with *Death and Transfiguration* (mono 699505CL—10/60)? E.G.

TCHAIKOVSKY. Manfred Symphony, Op. 58. The Tempest, Op. 18. U.S.S.R. State Symphony Orchestra conducted by **Nathan Rakhlin.** MK Ⓜ MK208B/1-2 (two 12 in., 60s. plus 19s. 6d. P.T.).

Manfred:
French Nat. R.O., Silvestri (3/59) Ⓜ ALP1668
N.B.C. S.O., Toscanini (6/59) Ⓜ RB16090
Tempest:
Philh., Fistoulari (6/58) Ⓜ ALP1582

Manfred is in a sad state: record companies please note. There is still no stereo version, and if ever a work deserved stereo, *Manfred* does, not because of antiphonal gimmickry, but because the volume of sound exuded by the vast orchestra and the horn section playing as loud as possible, *pavillons en l'air*, requires the maximum spread in width and depth in order to avoid sounding tight and boxy. This new Russian set, in spite of some creditable features, does sound boxy: it is as if all the instruments were at exactly equal distances from the microphone—about 2 ft. 6 inches. Tchaikovsky's lush texture needs room to stretch itself comfortably, and the Russians seem to have only one studio or hall that gives the right amount of reverberation for a symphony orchestra. Apparently they didn't use it for these sessions, and the orchestral timbre is like that on the pre-war French discs: very dry and analytical, and very close.

Rakhlin gives an impressive account of *The Tempest*, but I still prefer Fistoulari for his tremendous drive and the superior sound, though not even he can convince me that *The Tempest* is one of Tchaikovsky's best works. It lacks the logical structure of *Romeo and Juliet*, and what is more important, it lacks a really big tune. There is a limit to the amount of sound and fury we can stand in the name of Shakespeare, and *The Tempest* goes beyond it.

The remaining three sides—yes, three, as opposed to Toscanini and Silvestri who use only two—are devoted to *Manfred*. Here I do not think that Rakhlin is happy at all. Most of his tempi are on the slow side (which partially explains the extra side) and as a result the first movement never really gets going at all. It's all very well to begin *lento lugubre* as marked, but there must be some flexibility in a romantic score such as this one. Silvestri, unfortunately, is too flexible, and bends not only the tempi but also the orchestration. Toscanini is brilliant but rather on the fast side. Rakhlin is slow enough to induce boredom, and (alas) the Astarte section sounds cold and matter-of-fact instead of warm and tender, though the fault may here lie partly with the recording acoustic. The scherzo plods along in a manner totally unworthy of an Alpine fairy, and the waterfall appears to be somewhat clogged up. Toscanini's performance of this movement is wonderfully bright and scintillating, but I am afraid the only long-term solution is to persuade Kletzki to re-record his interpretation (but this time uncut, please) and in stereo! D.S.

LOVRO VON MATACIC. Borodin. Prince Igor: Overture; Prelude to Act 3; Polovtsian Dances. **Moussorgsky.** A Night on the Bare Mountain. **Rimsky-Korsakov.** Russian Easter Festival Overture, Op. 36. **Philharmonia Orchestra** conducted by **Lovro von Matacic.** Columbia Ⓢ SAX2327 (12 in., 30s. plus 9s. 9d. P.T.). Mono: 33CX1654 (8/59).

Matacic and the Philharmonia combine to give brilliant performances of these pieces, almost managing the feat of making excitement extend even to the *Russian Easter Festival* overture. The *Prince Igor* overture, perhaps, would have benefited from a steadier pulse—the strength of the music demands, really, a less wayward reading. Nevertheless it is very well placed, forming with the Polovtsian March and Dances something like a *Prince Igor* Suite. The sound of the record in mono was always exceptionally good; in stereo it has now, without losing very much in richness, gained something even further in clarity and brilliance. M.M.

CONSTANTIN SILVESTRI. Prokofiev. Love of Three Oranges—Suite, Op. 33a. **Khachaturian.** Gayaneh Ballet Suite: Dance of the Young Maidens (No. 27); Lullaby (No. 13); Sabre Dance (No. 35). **Rimsky-Korsakov.** Capriccio Espagnol, Op. 34. **Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra** conducted by **Constantin Silvestri.** H.M.V. Ⓜ ALP1818: (12 in., 30s. plus 9s. 9d. P.T.).

There were already competent versions of Prokofiev's *Love of Three Oranges* Suite by Boult, Dorati, Malko and Steinberg before this one came along, and though it is extremely good and very well recorded I would more gladly have welcomed a less competent recording of some of the vocal parts of this opera of which our catalogue offers no examples at present. Nearly all the music in the suite has voice parts in the opera, and much of it makes far more sense with the words. I should have thought that Khachaturian's *Gayaneh* Suite was another work that had been recorded more than enough, but here too I must add that Silvestri achieves a very spirited performance, and the recording quality is a good deal more exciting than that on D.G.G.'s version reviewed elsewhere this month; the latter however offers three times as much more from this ballet. The record also brings the number of available versions of *Capriccio Espagnol* up to thirteen, but again the excellent results may be claimed as justification. The quality is unusually good in this as in the other two works, and Silvestri has inspired the Vienna Philharmonic to give splendidly vital performances of music of a type they do not seem to have recorded before. A stereo recording is scheduled for release. R.F.

VILEM TAUSKY. Bizet. Le Docteur Miracle: Overture. **Adam.** La Poupée de Nuremburg: Overture. **Offenbach.** La Vie Parisienne: Overture. **Royal Philharmonic Orchestra** conducted by **Vilem Tausky.** H.M.V. Ⓜ 7EP7116: Ⓢ PES5271 (7 in., 9s. 3d. plus 3s. 0½d. P.T.).

I wonder how many readers could have answered the question, "What else other than *Mastersingers* came, operatically, from Nuremburg?" Well, here is the answer and a pleasant addition to the catalogues it makes, as does also Bizet's very attractive overture to *Doctor Miracle*. Tausky obtains sparkling performances of all three overtures, with some notably stylish delicate playing. The Adam overture is broken in the middle but with a light piece of this sort that doesn't much matter.

The performances are so good that it is a pity that the stereo sound is not better. Lightly scored passages are all right, but the full orchestra sounds very hard and ungrateful. I have received only one side of the mono, but to judge from that, it is considerably better and I would suggest that stereo users choose the mono disc if they want this collection of pleasantly diverting music. T.H.

COLLEGIUM TERPSICHORE: Praetorius. Terpsichore: Entrée—Courante 183/117; Gavotte I, 1-3, 6; Spagnoletta 28; La Bourrée 32, 1/2; Ballet 268; Volte 201/210. **Widmann.** Tänze und Gagliarde: No. 13, Sophia; No. 4, Anna; No. 16, Clara; No. 3, Magdalena; No. 15, Agatha; No. 12, Regina. **Schein.** Banchetto Musicale: Suite No. 4 in D major; Suite No. 5 in G major; Suite No. 3 in A major. **Collegium Terpsichore.** D.G.G. Archive Ⓜ APM14166: Ⓢ SAPM198166 (12 in., 30s. plus 9s. 9d. P.T.).

The *Collegium Terpsichore* is a conductorless ensemble of (in this record) eighteen musicians, divided into four main groups: one consists of recorders, and the five players range from piccolo to bass, via descant, alto, and tenor instruments. The viols are no less broad in compass, and there are six of them, Johannes Koch doubling (or rather, trebling) on descant, alto, and tenor viols. Both recorder and viol groups make a well-balanced sound that is sweet without being sickly. The real surprise—and a very

pleasant one it is, too—comes from the lute section: five players using instruments of three different sizes, so that the plucked-string timbre is peculiarly rich and velvety, not at all hard as some lutes sound. Percussion instruments of various kinds, and including a variety of intriguing noises, are expertly played by Hans Bergese, while Fritz Neumeyer applies himself to the harpsichord (admirable realizations) and an instrument that roars as gently as any sucking dove, the *Knopfregal*, a reed instrument that was immensely popular in the sixteenth century. I think it may be almost the first time it has been recorded. If you want a new experience in stereo sound, listen to the *Knopfregal* as played in the Praetorius dances.

These are deliciously attractive pieces that will surely do something to turn aside the public indifference to Praetorius as a composer. His voluminous works have been published now for many years, but they are rarely performed: his reputation in modern times is as a theorist and lexicographer, but I defy any musical person to put on this disc and play it without being tempted to dance around the room. If the first *Entrée* doesn't get you, the *Gavotte* and the *Spagnoletta* will, and you will be fascinated by the harmonies, the scoring and the tunes, many of which were fairly common property in the sixteenth and early seventeenth century. In other words, Praetorius didn't compose all the melodies: some were just in the air around him, and he harmonized and scored them, or at any rate gave directions as to how they should be scored. The use of alternating tonal patterns in this disc is most successful, and the playing and ensemble are of such a high standard that one can only hope for more—perhaps French, Italian, or English dances. The suites by Widmann and Schein are slightly less interesting than those by Praetorius, but they are nevertheless well worth having. As the first step towards a do-it-yourself galliard kit, this disc could not be bettered.

D.S.

CHAMBER MUSIC

BEETHOVEN. String Quartets. No. 4 in C minor, Op. 18, No. 4; No. 9 in C major, Op. 59, No. 3, "Rasumovsky". **Smetana Quartet** (Jiri Novak and Lubomir Kostecky, violins; Milan Skampa, viola; Antonin Kohout, 'cello). Westminster Ⓜ XWN18937: Ⓢ WST14119 (12 in., 30s. plus 9s 9d. P.T.).

Quartet No. 4:
Budapest Quartet (12/56) Ⓜ ABR4051

Quartet No. 9:
Budapest Quartet (8/57) Ⓜ ABL3157
Koeckert Quartet (2/58) Ⓜ DGM18367
Tátrai Quartet (6/61) Ⓜ GMA38

It is obvious from the way gramophone records sell that many people who are thrilled by Beethoven's symphonies find his string quartets too "difficult". Probably it is not so much the musical content as the lack of colour contrasts and big climaxes that is off-putting. Most musicians would agree that they contain just as great music as the symphonies, but they can only be enjoyed when you have learnt to savour a much smaller and subtler range of contrasts. The Smetana Quartet offer an outstanding disc that I can recommend unreservedly to the beginner as well as the addict. First of all, the music is more immediately attractive than that of most Beethoven quartets; indeed I have always thought the C minor the ideal one to start on. Secondly the disc is splendid value for money; the rival Koeckert and Tátrai recordings listed above contain only one work. Thirdly it is very well recorded; the Budapest versions sounded well enough in their day, but their quality will not stand comparison with that of the new Smetana disc. Fourthly the playing is superbly good. Like the rival Janacek Quartet, the Smetana Quartet play from memory, and though I do not see very much point in this, it seems justified by results in the present instance. The slow movement of the *Rasumovsky* receives one of the slowest performances I can remember, and the tempo indication and metronome marking suggest that Beethoven wanted it played much quicker, but the music is convincing at this speed, and afterwards I found the Koeckert and Tátrai performances unpleasantly fast and hard to get used to. The 'cello sounds a little distant on the stereo version of this quartet, but the balance is pretty good, and better still in the C minor, though in this work the benefits of stereo seemed less apparent for some reason. But I must not leave the impression that there is anything much wrong with the sound, which is full and realistic and exciting both in mono and stereo. This is one of the most successful string quartet records that has ever come my way.

R.F.

FRANTISEK CECH. (*a*) **Debussy.** Sonata for flute, viola and harp. (*b*) **Milhaud.** Sonatina for flute and piano. (*c*) **Roussel.** Joueurs de flûte, Op. 27. **Frantisek Cech** (flute, *a*, *b*, *c*), **Jaroslav Karlovsky** (viola, *a*), **Karel Patras** (harp, *a*), **Alfred Holecek** (piano, *b*, *c*). Supraphon Ⓜ SUG20005 (10 in., 14s. 9d. plus 4s. 9d. P.T.).

During the 1914 war there were dark days not only for his beloved France but also for Debussy personally, with a growing cancer daily more evident. Included in the music he intended to write at this time was a set of six instrumental Sonatas. In the event, however, only three were written, not all of them particularly characteristic either of the composer or his chosen title, nor all of them, happily, fully reflecting the desperation about things in general he felt at the time. Best known of them is the Sonata for violin and piano, at present available in several recorded versions, and that for 'cello and piano, too, has been available on disc from time to time. This new Supraphon version, however, is the first I can trace in the English catalogues of the third and least problematic Sonata, for flute, viola, and harp.

To make ugly sounds with such a combination of instruments would tax the skill of any composer; Debussy, as might be expected, manages some ecstatically beautiful ones. More of them, perhaps, from the flute than the viola or harp; the flute's marvellous low register, so soft that it is almost useless orchestrally save in an occasional unaccompanied or nearly unaccompanied passage, has here elbow-room and to spare. The viola is treated less sympathetically (at times the part almost seems to bear traces of Debussy's original intention to write it for the oboe), and the harp part, too, is mostly staider than one might have expected. But to be tempted to discuss in this fashion the individual, or even the collective sounds made by the instruments is to disclose indirectly the nature of the music. This does undoubtedly ramble rather oddly from one beautiful sound to another curiously less beautiful and back again.

It may be that the players on this occasion contribute to this feeling of a lack of sense of purpose; in places they seem reluctant to get going. But they are reluctant in no other way, and the flute-playing is particularly beautiful, lending a highly suitable pastoral air to the whole. All the players are quite well recorded. But there is a lack of sense of presence, and the harp also lacks some degree of body in two ways: it is rather backwardly balanced, and it needs additionally some bass lift in reproduction—more, really, than the general level of background murmur makes it desirable to give.

The Debussy is not the only addition to the currently available repertoire made by the new disc; the Milhaud and the Roussel also extend the horizons of gramophone listeners (though not those of flute students struggling with advanced examinations, where these pieces are great favourites). Milhaud, writing in the 1930's, explores principally the agility of flute and piano. This makes things easy for the listener, and is here made to seem to make them equally easy for the performers; the effect is achieved, however, only by the exercise of great skill on the part of flautist and pianist alike. Roussel, writing in the 1920's, sought in his *Joueurs de flûte* to exploit rather more varied characteristics of the instrument by relating the four pieces of which the work consists not only to four outstanding flautists of the day, but also to four styles of flute-playing in the past. Marcel Moyse's piece harks back to Pan and his syrinx; Gaston Blanquard's to Virgil's *Tityre*; Louis Fleury's to the Hindu *Krishna* and Philippe Gaubert's to *Monsieur de la Péjaudie*, a character from Henri de Regnier's *La Pêcheresse*. As well as owing something to their various stylistic origins, all four pieces understandably owe even more to Roussel's own individual style. Unfortunately only three of them are here recorded. *Krishna* has been omitted (though nobody seems to have told the sleeve-note writer of this), and the result is, obviously, in some degree to misrepresent the work as a whole. Yet it is admittedly a collection of four pieces rather than a four-movement work, and what there is of it here certainly serves to display some excellent flute-playing as Cech deputises for three of his illustrious predecessors. In any event this unhappiness in the Roussel in no way detracts from the great advantage of having the Debussy and the Milhaud readily available on disc for the first time.

M.M.

KODALY. Three Hungarian Dances. TCHAIKOVSKY. Méditation, Op. 42, No. 1. David Oistrakh (violin), **N. Walter** (piano). Saga (M) EFID1005 (7 in., 5s. 4½d. plus 1s. 8½d. P.T.).

In August, 1957, Oistrakh included in a recital disc an attractive arrangement of Kodály's *Dances from the Village of Kallo*, originally written in 1950 for voice and piano and then arranged for chorus and a small handful of instruments. Last month I was writing about a reissue of this disc on Parliament PLP118. Saga have now issued the same arrangement played by the same violinist, but with a different accompanist, and a misleadingly different title. Oistrakh takes the beginning a little slower, and he is allowed more dynamic range and given a better balance, though there seems to be a slight cut-back towards the end, which does not sound quite so exciting. The playing is wonderful in both versions. The Tchaikovsky piece on the back was originally intended as the slow movement of the famous Violin Concerto. It is well worth hearing, especially when played with the passionate feeling that Oistrakh brings to it, but the quality is rather strident and it would seem that the violinist was much closer to the microphone than when he recorded the Kodály dances. R.F.

INSTRUMENTAL

ALBENIZ. Suite Española: No. 5 (Asturias), No. 3 (Sevillanas), No. 4 (Cadiz). **Tango in D, Op. 165, No. 2. Córdoba** (Cantos de España, Op. 232, No. 4).

GRANADOS. Allegro di Concierto. Spanish Dances: No. 5 in E minor (Andaluza); No. 10 in G; No. 12 in A minor. **José Iturbi** (piano). Columbia (M) 33CX1743 (12 in., 30s. plus 9s. 9d. P.T.).

José Iturbi has received some pretty dusty reviews (in this magazine and elsewhere) for his playing of classics like Beethoven and Chopin; but to anyone who may be tempted to underestimate him in his native Spanish repertoire this disc will come as a most agreeable corrective. Here, without posturings or exaggerations, are thoroughly idiomatic performances of these minor but attractive keyboard pieces, their pathos, ebullience and evocative quality admirably caught. The clarity of articulation and vital rhythm of *Asturias* confirm that Iturbi is very much a pianist to be reckoned with, and his dazzling performance of Granados's *Allegro di Concierto* distracts attention by its brilliance from the superficiality of the piece. The recording is very lifelike. L.S.

BACH. Organ Sonatas. No. 1 in E flat major, BWV525; No. 2 in C minor, BWV526. **Jiří Ropek** (organ). Supraphon (M) SUF20014 (10 in., 14s 9d. plus 4s. 9d. P.T.).

These competent performances on a neo-classical organ are nicely recorded. Neither the quality of the instrument nor the quality of the playing have quite the distinction to be found on Walcha's two-disc set of all six Trio Sonatas played on the Schnitger organ at Cappel and the small organ in the Jacobikirche at Lübeck. On the other hand Supraphon offer slightly better value for money with two sonatas for less than a pound, whereas Walcha gets only one more onto a full-size top-price record. Ropek's playing is leisured, civilised and stylish, and I much enjoyed it. The quiet, unassertive music has an extraordinary serenity, and you like it more and more. R.F.

BACH. Organ Works. Toccata and Fugue in D minor, BWV565; Prelude and Fugue in A minor, BWV543; Passacaglia and Fugue in C minor, BWV582; Prelude and Fugue in E minor, BWV533. **Carl Weinrich** (organ). Westminster (S) WST14043 (12 in., 30s. plus 9s. 9d. P.T.). Recorded on the organ of the Värfrukyrka, Skänninge, Sweden.

"Carl Weinrich performs the complete organ works of Bach", says the front of the sleeve, and the organ on which he does it is given prominence. I had never heard of Skänninge or its organ, and I turned eagerly to the back of the sleeve to read about this instrument, no doubt an important discovery. There was no information whatsoever. I rang up a leading authority on old organs and he had never heard of it either. My Swedish Guide Book reveals that Skänninge is a tiny place (pop. 2,220) a hundred miles south-west of Stockholm, and though it mentions a couple of churches there, it does not mention the Värfrukyrka. The sleeve-note does give information about Mr. Weinrich, who, I learn, "has been hailed throughout the entire Western world as one of the greatest organists of our age". I'm not too sure whether I live in the Western world; if I do, there is a corner of it that has not heard of Mr. Weinrich, and even if it is the other side of the Atlantic I suspect you could find chaps in the remoter parts of Paraguay who had not done much hailing so far.

However, none of this should be taken as any criticism of Mr. Weinrich, who directs the music at Princeton University Chapel, and is, on the evidence of this record, a very sound performer. His playing is rhythmic and accurate, though not very exciting. He does not make enough of the marvellous end to the D minor Toccata and Fugue, but the comparative lack of excitement here and elsewhere is partly due to the balance. The church appears to be very resonant, and presumably to avoid an excess of reverberation the microphone has been placed extremely close to some parts of the organ. This results in great clarity and immediacy, but also in a lack of atmosphere. I take the organ to be a modern neo-classic instrument, though it may well incorporate old material. It does not seem to me to have the impact, variety and balance of the best old organs in Holland and Germany, but I would like to hear some of Bach's quieter choral preludes before dogmatising on the subject. Certainly it is pleasant to listen to and worthy of the music. I enjoyed most the Passacaglia and the little E minor Prelude and Fugue. Each side runs to about 18 minutes of music, which seems rather short measure, especially as Bach's entire organ output is to be recorded. On the next disc Westminster really must tell us a little about the organ, and why they brought an American all those thousands of miles to play on it. R.F.

CHOPIN. Nocturnes, Nos. 1-19. Moura Lympany (piano). H.M.V. (M) CLP1424-5 (two 12 in., 51s. 6d. plus 16s. 9d. P.T.).

Complete:
Novaes (1/58) (M) PL9632/1-2
Rubinstein (5/59) (M) ALP1701-2

Miss Lympany has been more fortunate this time in quality of sound than she was with the Waltzes, issued last January. Although this piano tone is not the best H.M.V. have given us, it is adequate; only in the passionate climax of the C minor nocturne, Op. 48 No. 1, did I notice any distortion. This puts the new recording in a rather strong position *vis-à-vis* its only rivals at present in the catalogue. Not only is it considerably cheaper, but the sound is quite comparable with that of Guiomar Novaes's recording and inevitably better than that of Rubinstein's, which is an LP transfer from pre-war 78s. How does it compare in point of interpretation? The main characteristic of Miss Lympany's playing here is a charming unforced simplicity of approach. The sophisticated elegance of Rubinstein is quite foreign to her, and if that is the way you like the Nocturnes played you will of course disregard mere differences of price and tonal quality. But there is in fact a great deal to be said for Miss Lympany's approach, even if (as I think) it misses some of the music's poetic intensity. For one thing she does keep it flowing forward in a way which I find much preferable to Novaes's rather stiff and ponderous playing. Moreover tempi are on the whole well judged and well held: the only one that seems to me definitely wrong is that which she adopts for the middle section of the F minor, Op. 55 No. 1 —far faster than Chopin's mere *più mosso* would suggest. But this is quite uncharacteristic of these interpretations in general, which have a placid charm that makes a welcome contrast to the neurotic rubato so often foisted on Chopin. My own favourite among recordings of the Nocturnes was that by Stefan Askenase, which seemed to me to catch much more of their rapturous poetry without ever losing an essential intimacy of expression, but his complete recording has been deleted, and in its absence Miss Lympany's version can be very highly recommended. J.N.

CHOPIN. Preludes, Op. 28—complete. **Prelude No. 25 in C sharp minor, Op. 45. Prelude No. 26 in A flat major, Op. Posth. Sergio Fiorentino** (piano). Saga (M) STM6009 (12 in., 19s. 2d. plus 5s. 10d. P.T.).

I really don't believe there is another category of Chopin's works so difficult to bring off as the Preludes. Together they form a microcosm of his whole technical and emotional range, and it requires an extraordinary musical authority to catch and establish the individuality of each piece without making it seem irrelevant to what precedes and follows it. Sergio Fiorentino

seems to me not yet to have acquired this authority, although he has a remarkable technique and considerable feeling for certain aspects of Chopin's work. For some of the preludes he finds precisely the right mood and style: the *Raindrop* seems to me outstandingly well done on this disc, for example. But far too often Fiorentino concentrates so hard on putting the music across that he ends by stifling it beneath a mass of irrelevant musical gestures—ill-judged rubato, over-differentiated part-writing, exaggerated tempi and dynamics. When he relaxes and allows the music to speak for itself he is really very impressive, but viewed as a whole his account of the Op. 28 preludes is a disappointment, because it emphasises their diversity without suggesting their essential psychological unity. And yet his performance of some of them—and of the two separate preludes—does show a sympathy for Chopin that makes one hope Fiorentino will learn the virtues of understatement. The recorded piano tone is good, but my pressing had a slightly noisier surface than is usual. J.N.

CHOPIN. Waltzes. No. 16 in A flat major, Op. Posth.; Unnumbered—in A minor, Op. Posth.; No. 14 in E minor, Op. Posth.; No. 10 in B minor, Op. 69, No. 2; No. 13 in D flat major, Op. 70, No. 3; No. 3 in A minor, Op. 34, No. 2; No. 1 in E flat major, Op. 18; No. 11 in G flat major, Op. 70, No. 1; No. 2 in A flat major, Op. 34, No. 1; No. 9 in A flat major, Op. 69, No. 1; No. 4 in F major, Op. 34, No. 3; No. 5 in A flat major, Op. 42; Unnumbered—in E flat major; No. 12 in F minor, Op. 70, No. 2; No. 6 in D flat major, Op. 64, No. 1; No. 7 in C sharp minor, Op. 64, No. 2; No. 8 in A flat major, Op. 64, No. 3; No. 15 in E major, Op. Posth.; No. 17 in E flat major, Op. Posth. **Ecossaises, Op. 72c:** No. 1 in D major; No. 2 in G major; No. 3 in D flat major. **Sergio Fiorentino** (piano). Saga (M) XID5016 (12 in., 15s. 10d. plus 5s. 2d. P.T.).

It was a bright idea on someone's part to arrange all Chopin's waltzes—including four that you will not find in most editions—in chronological order of composition, instead of by opus number. (Or almost: for some reason two early ones are inserted at the end of the series, after Op. 64). One really does get some idea of the way in which Chopin's attitude to the waltz developed with his artistic personality. On the other hand it means that Chopin's own sequence, with its careful contrast of mood and key, is broken up in the case of Op. 34; one can't have it both ways, I suppose. On the whole I found this disc a good deal less disappointing than Fiorentino's recording of the Preludes, reviewed above. The difference is not so much in his approach, however, which is still a disconcerting mixture of real sensibility and almost wanton exaggeration, as in the music. The waltzes are among Chopin's most spontaneous, least worked-up compositions; they leave more scope for the performer's individuality than, say, the nocturnes or the preludes, which must be approached with deep humility. So if Fiorentino is occasionally brash in his treatment of the waltzes, I cannot say that it matters too much; certainly he gives us a great deal of very lively piano-playing, and apart from some distortion at the end of the second band he has been well recorded. For good measure he throws in—with great speed and brilliance—the three little posthumous Ecossaises, to complete this picture of Chopin in the ballroom. J.N.

CHOPIN. Piano Works. Ballades Nos. 1-4; Prelude in A flat major, Op. Posth.; Prelude in C sharp minor, Op. 45; Berceuse in D flat major, Op. 57. **Fou Ts'ong** (piano). Westminster (M) XWN18956: (S) WST14137 (12 in., 30s. plus 9s. 9d. P.T.).

Ballades—complete:

Arrau	(4/55) (M) AXTL1043-4
Casadesus	(9/60) (M) SBF250-262
Gulda	(4/55) (M) LW5156
Frugoni	(7/58) (M) PL10490
Rubinstein	(9/60) (M) RB16206: (S) SB2082

Fou Ts'ong's approach to Chopin is not at all that of the barnstorming keyboard tiger, who sacrifices everything to the appearance of virtuosity. He aims, to judge by this record, rather at a cool lucidity of texture that will enable everything to be heard and to make its own effect. This is admirable in principle and, for the most part, in practice too, but it has its dangers. I cannot help feeling that some of the playing on this disc sounds just a little too carefully considered, not quite spontaneous enough. This is of course far better than the kind of bogus spontaneity indulged in by some pianists, but it does mean that Fou Ts'ong is not yet in quite the same class with Rubinstein and Casadesus as an interpreter of Chopin; he still has to learn to forget himself in the music as much as they, at least apparently, do. Perhaps his carefulness may have something to do with technique—for he never attempts to fake or smudge difficult passages by taking them fast or by jamming the pedal down. As a result we can hear that the coda of the F minor ballade, to take one example, sounds just a little laboured, and the music does not blaze up uncontrollably, as it ideally should. Fou Ts'ong has plenty of technique, for all that, and could afford to let himself go just a little more. There is a great deal to enjoy on this disc, and it is immensely refreshing to come across a Chopin pianist who thinks too much, if anything. The recording is good—marginally better in stereo than mono, I think. I very much hope we shall be hearing more of Mr. Fou's Chopin, for I have heard him achieve at concerts a spontaneity this record merely points to. J.N.

GLAZUNOV. Theme and Variations in F sharp minor, Op. 72. Leff Pouishnoff (piano). Saga (M) STP 1025 (7 in., 7s. 2½d. plus 2s. 3½d. P.T.).

Both Glazunov and Pouishnoff enjoyed a good deal more attention and admiration between the wars than they do now, and I would like to have welcomed this conjunction of two musicians who do not deserve their present neglect.

However, the finest of Glazunov's piano works should be some consolation, especially as Pouishnoff, a Glazunov pupil (for composition), plays this music with affection and understanding.

Alas, this fine performance of some very worth-while music is sadly marred by the recording quality. The piano tone suggests that this is a transfer from a not-very-good seventy-eight, which may well be the case. On the first side almost all dynamic contrasts are levelled out, so that a *piano* and a *forte* sound equally loud. On side two the pitch keeps varying, with excruciating results at the end of the last variation but one. R.F.

LISZT. Operatic Paraphrases. **Verdi.** Rigoletto Paraphrase. **Wagner.** Spinning Song from "The Flying Dutchman"; O du mein holder Abendstern and Entry of the Guests from "Tannhäuser"; Tannhäuser Overture. **Gounod.** Faust Waltz. **Edith Farnadi** (piano). Westminster (M) XWN18828 (12 in., 30s. plus 9s. 9d. P.T.).

It is good to see Edith Farnadi's name reappearing in the record catalogues, but I hope that Westminster will not confine themselves to the Liszt titles which were never issued here by Nixa. There is some very good playing on the present disc, but I am inclined to think that a reissue of Farnadi's version of the Sonata, the *Légendes*, or the *Ballades* would have been even more welcome. This is a result of the interpretative problems peculiar to these particular works. Like the similar group of arrangements recorded by Alfred Brendel on Vox mono PL10580, this selection contains examples both of comparatively literal "transcription" and also of free "paraphrase". To my mind the latter—the *Rigoletto* paraphrase, for example—are the more interesting, for they show us the original composer as seen through Liszt's eyes. Here, clearly, the pianist must try to capture some of Liszt's very individual rhetoric in his performance, and I think Farnadi succeeds in this. What I am less happy about is her attempt to infuse it into the more literal arrangements, notably those of the *Tannhäuser* excerpts. Perhaps it is right to try to make them sound like Liszt, but I should have preferred something more like idealized Wagner. A baritone who gave us "O star of eve" with the kind of soupy phrasing that Miss Farnadi uses would be laughed off the stage, while a conductor who introduced this kind of rubato into the Entry of the Guests would probably be given the sack. Not that Farnadi is for that reason wrong to do it in Liszt's transcriptions; he may very well have done the same sort of thing himself. But all the same I can't help preferring Brendel's more aloof approach, his air of minimizing all the technical difficulties; if Miss Farnadi plays like a pianist (and she certainly has a brilliant technique) he plays like a composer. But in any case there is no overlap between the contents of their two records, and both are well worth a hearing. The recording on this new Farnadi disc is excellent, though rather too close—one can hear quite a lot of pedal action. (Brendel was appallingly recorded, but his record is still a must for all connoisseurs of fine piano-playing.) J.N.

SMETANA. Piano Works. On the Seashore, Op. 17; Polka de Salon, Op. 7, No. 1; The Bear; Polka in A minor; Furiant; Toccatina; Polka Poétique, Op. 8, No. 2; The Little Hen; Polka, Op. 13, No. 2; Dupak. **Mirka Pokorná** (piano). D.G.G. (M) LPEM-19177 (12 in., 25s. 9d. plus 8s. 4½d. P.T.). Stereo: SLPEM136023 (12/59).

This is very well recorded, and it was a pleasure to hear the recital again, now in a mono form which yields surprisingly little to the stereo one. Smetana's piano music, too little known, bears repetition well, and those who want a wide-ranging representation of it are well served by this disc. But the later pieces are the most interesting ones, and for this reason the Firkusny record of late Polkas and Dances (Capitol mono P8372) might be a better choice for the small collection. Don't be put off by the twee titles. *Das Hühnchen* (Little Hen), for example, is a brilliant and extended piece, almost suggestive of a Liszt fantasy on *The Bartered Bride*. Miss Pokorná plays it extremely well. A.P.

SUK. Through Life and Dream, Op. 30. About Friendship, Op. 36. Pavel Stepán (piano). Supraphon (M) SUB-10017 (12 in., 30s. plus 9s. 9d. P.T.).

Record-reviewing has its compensations, and not least among them is the opportunity—indeed, the necessity—of getting to know unfamiliar but worthwhile music. I willingly confess that I had never heard Suk's *Through Life and Dream* before this record came my way—nor is this really surprising. It is on the long side (ten pieces, some of them quite substantial) to fit into a recital; moreover the very title is enough to discourage English pianists from taking it up. Yet it is in fact accurate enough. These ten pieces are a kind of personal, sometimes explicitly autobiographical, testament, ranging in mood from light-hearted gaiety to the solemn outpouring of gratitude at the recovery of the composer's son from an illness and the agonised despair of the piece in which he tries to give musical expression to his sorrow at the death of his wife (who was also Dvořák's daughter). In reaction to the excesses of biographical interpretation of music indulged in by earlier generations, we tend nowadays to assume that such matters have no real musical relevance, but Suk (like his compatriots Smetana and Janacek) thought otherwise, and who is to say he was wrong?

The idiom of these pieces is fairly chromatic (they were written about 1909), but the rhythms are strong and emphasise the harmony's sense of direction; the effect is not unlike a mixture of Smetana and Reger. Only in the fifth piece (the hymn of gratitude already mentioned) and perhaps in the later *Friendship* (1920), which stands as a kind of appendix to the collection, does Suk seem to me to fall a victim to the characteristic late-romantic tendency to inflate his material beyond what it can bear. Otherwise these pieces seem to me succinct, full of individuality and well worth getting to know. Pavel Stépán plays them with evident sympathy and understanding; even the occasional liberties he takes (apart from the cut in No. 5) seem based on knowledge of the music rather than ignorance. The recording is very good, save for a slight lack of ring to the treble. J.N.

WALDEMAR DOEHLING. Bach. Concerto in the Italian Style, BWV971. Six Preludes for beginners, BWV933-8. Prelude and Fugue in C minor, BWV-847. Prelude and Fugue in C major, BWV846. Partita No. 1 in B flat major, BWV826 (XID5040). **Handel.** Air and Variations from Suite No. 5, ("The Harmonious Blacksmith"). **Daquin.** Le Coucou. **Sweelinck.** Variations on "Mein junges Leben hat ein' End' " (EFID1010). **Waldemar Döhling** (harpsichord). Saga (M) XID5040 (12 in., 15s. 10d. plus 5s. 2d. P.T.), and Saga (M) EFID1010 (7 in., 5s. 4½d. plus 1s. 8½d. P.T.).

This young German harpsichordist is as yet unknown in this country, though I think it can be revealed that it was he, unnamed, who played the solo part so well in Saga's recording of the Fifth Brandenburg. On these two discs he shows himself to be a player of excellent taste and secure technique with a sound sense of style. His *Italian Concerto* is a great deal better than that of many a more famous player; he has admirably steady rhythm, most artistic phrasing, and well conceived registration which he very neatly puts into effect. It is something of a relief to find a harpsichordist who can resist the temptation to indulge in fancy colorations and fussy changes, and who can see the wood for the trees. I like too his choice of tempi. The slow movement is perhaps unduly restricted in expressiveness, and the Six Preludes also might have been more imaginative; but the C major Prelude and Fugue is well phrased, and Mr. Döhling's part-playing is impeccable throughout. In the Partita (No. 1, not No. 2 as the label insists), as in the Six Preludes, I was somewhat disappointed that he rarely makes any variation for repeats; but his buoyancy of rhythm is delectable, and the final *Gigue* quite brilliant. The recording unfortunately is most dislikable, taken far too close and at too high a level, so that the harpsichord sounds like an ironclad going into battle. Since Saga, by printing a sleeve-note in four languages, seem to have an international market in view, they may care to be told that there are elementary errors in the French, and that the Spanish is likely to be snapped up by collectors as a riot of wild howlers—the words used to translate "Selected Works", for example, actually mean "Mingled Labours"!

The most impressive performance on the smaller disc is of the Sweelinck variations, which though not identified (save as being in A minor, which they most emphatically are not), turn out to be the splendid set on *Mein junges Leben hat ein End'*. The little Daquin piece is a bit mechanical, and the "Harmonious Blacksmith", labelled as being by "George Handel" (presumably to distinguish him from Charlie), though musical and well controlled, is a trifle overgenerous in the use of the harp stop. The recorded sound, I'm afraid, is like that on the twelve-inch disc. L.S.

CHORAL AND SONG

BACH. Cantatas. Vergnügte Ruh', beliebte Seelenlust, BWV170†. Christmas Oratorio, BWV248: "Bereite dich Zion"; "Schlafe, mein Liebster". O ewiges Feuer, O Ursprung der Liebe, BWV34: "Wohl euch, ihr auserwählten Seelen". Es ist euch gut, dass ich hingehe, BWV108: "Was mein Herz von Dir begehrt". **Aafje Heynis** (contralto) with **Piet van Egmond** (organ) and **Netherlands Chamber Orchestra** conducted by **Szymon Goldberg** in the item marked †, the remainder with **Vienna Symphony Orchestra** conducted by **Hans Gillesberger.** Philips (M) ABL3365: (S) SABL194 (12 in., 30s. plus 9s. 9d. P.T.).

Cantata No. 170:
Höngen, Bavarian S.O., Lehmann
(9/55) (M) APM14028

This is, to my mind, the best recording Aafje Heynis has yet made and as it is material that offers many technical difficulties, it gives one a good idea of her musicianship. L.S. found Elisabeth Höngen's singing of *Vergnügte Ruh', beliebte Seelenlust* ("Pleasant rest, beloved soul-desire"), the beautiful Cantata for the Sixth Sunday after Trinity, "regrettably unsteady . . . sometimes rather slack about enunciation . . . and very ill at ease and breathless" in the testing aria "Wie jammern mich" ("How grieve me then the perverted hearts"), but he spoke highly of the orchestral accompaniment. Perhaps the playing of the Netherlands Chamber Orchestra, under Szymon Goldberg, is not quite so smooth in the lovely opening aria as the other, but it is good here and all through, and Miss Heynis sings with steady tone, fine phrasing, and a sensitive feeling for the words. The harpsichord tells well in the middle section of the aria. The singer could have treated the recitative that follows, in which the sinful world is rebuked, more forcefully—particularly at the words "Racha, Racha, crieth"—and should have observed the appogiaturas at two obvious places. The aria "Wie jammern", before mentioned, can only be sung successfully, as Whittaker says in his book on the cantatas, by a singer of exceptional intelligence. Miss Heynis comes out of the ordeal well, her breath control is admirable, she avoids aspirates in the florid passages—and the long trill at "verlacht" ("deride"): has any contralto ever managed to sing this?—and only needs a greater intensity of emotion in this lament over the perversities of mankind. The scoring is remarkable: no basses or continuo, but violins and violas in unison and an obbligato organ part without pedal. The vocal score is almost a necessary aid for the listener if he is to get the most out of this long aria. The second recitative has a luminous string chordal accompaniment, with harpsichord continuo. It speaks of the soul turning wholly to God and longing for the opening of the gates of Zion, and these sentiments are expressed in the final and joyful aria.

The two arias "Prepare thyself, Zion" and "Sleep my loved one" from the *Christmas Oratorio* are too well known to

need comment. Both are well sung, but the entry of the voice in the Slumber Song is blotted out (in stereo and mono) by the flute an octave above. Someone should have noticed this momentary bit of bad balance. "Wohl euch, ihr auserwählten Seelen" ("Well for you, ye chosen souls"), an aria from the Whit-Sunday cantata *O ewiges Feuer* ("O fire everlasting"), is adapted from an unnumbered and incomplete wedding cantata with the same title. It is in Bach's most melodious and most tender vein and is scored, with lovely effect, for two flutes, muted violins and viola, and continuo. Hans Gillesberger takes it a shade too fast for my liking; the semiquaver groups should not sound at all hurried and it is on them that the tempo must be based. For the rest, Miss Heynis sings the exquisite aria serenely and is well accompanied. The disc ends with the aria, equally well sung, "Was mein Herz von dir begehrt" ("What my heart from Thee desires") from the cantata for the fourth Sunday after Easter, *Es ist euch gut, dass ich hingehe* ("It is for your good that I go away")—the text is from St. John xvi. 7. Scored for two violins, viola, and continuo, it is a most beautiful expression of joy, with a radiant conclusion at the thought of the glory of eternity.

This is a fine and rewarding disc, both in choice of material and in performance. I hope that Philips will provide texts with English translations—perferably literal ones such as Whittaker gives. There is little to choose between the mono and stereo—the latter has the usual virtues, but both are very good. A.R.

BEETHOVEN. Songs. Ich liebe dich; Mit einem gemalten Band; Neue Liebe, neues Leben; Der Kuss; Adelaide. **Walther Ludwig** (tenor), **Walter Bohle** (piano). D.G.G. (S) SEPL121016 (7 in., 12s. plus 3s. 11d. P.T.). Mono: EPL30517 (1/60).

Stereo removes the slight edge on Walther Ludwig's tone which I mentioned in my review of the mono version of this disc, but the balance between voice and piano remains poor and, naturally, there is the same lack of legato singing in *Adelaide* as before. The shorter songs come off best. A.R.

BERLIOZ. L'Enfance du Christ—complete. **Peter Pears** (tenor), **Edgar Fleet** (tenor), **John Frost** (bass), **Joseph Rouleau** (bass), **Elsie Morison** (soprano), **John Cameron** (baritone), **The St. Anthony Singers, Goldsbrough Orchestra** conducted by **Colin Davis.** London L'Oiseau-Lyre (M) OL50201-2: (S) SOL60032-3 (two 12 in., 60s. plus 19s. 6d. P.T.).

Mono:
Munch (3/58) RB16061-2

There is no need for any critical hesitation here. This performance of *L'Enfance du Christ* has all the qualities that I have for years dreamt of and longed for. Colin Davis evidently has an instinctive feeling for and understanding of Berlioz' music, and from start to finish there is not a suspicion of the "oratorio style" in his conception of the exquisite work. He sees it as a true sacred drama—one indeed, that with an inspired producer might well be transferred to the stage and prove an immense success—devoid of theatricality, a story treated by Berlioz with rare imagination, humanity and tenderness, and flawed only by his perverse introduction of the Trio for two flutes and harp into the last scene just because he liked it, and so chose to ignore that the weary and harassed parents of the Holy Child could only have had one wish, after having taken some food and wine—to lay down and sleep.

It is not, of course, a fatal flaw and the Trio itself, if overlong, makes pleasant enough listening. The memory of it is soon blotted out by the charming "Goodnight" chorus and above all by the Epilogue which, for me, contains the greatest music Berlioz ever wrote and in which, laying the orchestra aside and writing for voices unaccompanied, he achieves a radiant and spiritual beauty without parallel in the history of nineteenth-century music. Who but Berlioz could have written the astonishing Nocturnal March that begins after the brief narration at the start of the work, a March, as Mr. Davis so well brings out, expressive not only of the darkness of the night, but of the dark foreboding in the soul of the King the soldiers are guarding—the premonition that his throne and power will be overthrown by a child.

The wealth of melody, and such varied melody, poured out in this work is amazing: and how wonderful are such touches of scoring as the entry of the flute, somehow emphasising his loneliness, as Herod sings the superb phrases "O nuit profonde" in his great aria, with its longing of the uneasy man for the simple life of a shepherd. Joseph Rouleau sings the aria so movingly that at this moment he gains our sympathy for Herod, but after the Soothsayers have consulted the spirits of darkness, interpreted his dream, and confirmed his fears he turns into the bloodthirsty tyrant of history. The cabbalistic orchestral section, in seven-four time, is more truly sinister, to my mind, than the theatrical orgies of the witches in the *Fantastic Symphony*.

After the cruel demand for the slaughter of the innocents there is a long pause and the scene changes to one all sweetness and light, Mary and Joseph watching over the Holy Child in the manger at Bethlehem. Elsie Morison and John Cameron are perfectly cast as Mary and Joseph—what a relief to have a soprano and not a mezzo in Mary's part—and bring out the full beauty and tenderness of their duet. Souzay was equally good in the R.C.A. issue but Kopleff, also good, sounded too mature.

Mr. Davis has seen to it that the angelic voices warning Joseph and Mary to flee at once with their son into Egypt are absolutely steady and the balance here between the voices and the quiet organ part, the violins shining above, is admirable. The effect of distance is almost as good in the mono version. The dying away of the angelic hosannas at the end of this part is ravishingly beautiful. This is a splendid piece of recording.

Peter Pears has already given a taste of his quality in the opening narration: and now, after Mr. Davis's and the orchestra's imaginative playing of the little modal Overture, depicting the ardours and endurance of the journey to come, and a singing of the celebrated Shepherd's Chorus of farewell which is treated with complete simplicity and is free of any evangelical overtones. Mr. Pears shares the honours with the orchestra in the enchanting description of the Holy Family at the oasis—one of Berlioz's most lovely and melodious inventions. He goes on to tell, with cunningly differentiated tone, of their journey to Sais over the burning sands of the desert. And so we reach the poignant scene of the search for shelter in that inhospitable city—"no room in the inn", once more—and not even in the stable: rejected contemptuously by Romans and Egyptians the exhausted parents at last find a friendly Ishmaelite to take them in. Nothing is more touching than when Joseph begs his wife, near to fainting, to join her voice with his in the cries of "Open, open, give us your help".

Joseph Rouleau, as the Ishmaelite father of the numerous family who attend to the wants of the Holy Family—a chorus which ends with a delicate scherzo-like passage of neighbourly fluttering here and there—changes his vocal tone most skilfully from that he used as Herod. The dialogue between him and Joseph, when they discover that they belong to the same trade, with the touching cadence as Joseph names the Holy Child—how beautifully Mr. Pears does this—is yet another example of Berlioz's extraordinary sensitivity.

Then, after the "Goodnight" chorus, comes the transcendent Epilogue. Mr. Pears's enunciation, in the brief narration before the chorus, is without any of the over-emphasised final consonants that marred Léopold Simoneau's singing of it in the now deleted Philips version. Let it be remembered that Berlioz himself wrote the libretto of this work and when the solo tenor begins, in hushed tones "My soul, what now remains for thee but to bow thy pride before such mystery revealed" it is as if he, a confessed unbeliever, had fallen on his knees. How truly he wrote to his great friend Humbert Ferrand of this chorus. "It seems to me to contain a feeling of infinite, of divine love", touchingly adding "I thought of you as I listened to it". I cannot myself listen to it without tears.

This then is a great, a truly dedicated performance in which, under Colin Davis's inspired and inspiring direction, the soloists, the St. Anthony Singers and The Goldsbrough Orchestra and the engineers all excel. Furthermore the discs are worthily presented, with a new and excellent translation of the text by Dr. J. B. Hanson and admirable notes by David Cairns, and on the cover a very good reproduction in colour of the Flight into Egypt by the fifteenth century painter Giovanni Paolo. I most truly hope that this outstanding achievement will have the great success it deserves. Charles Munch's performance had many merits but it is here surpassed by one that has also the benefit of a stereo version. A.R.

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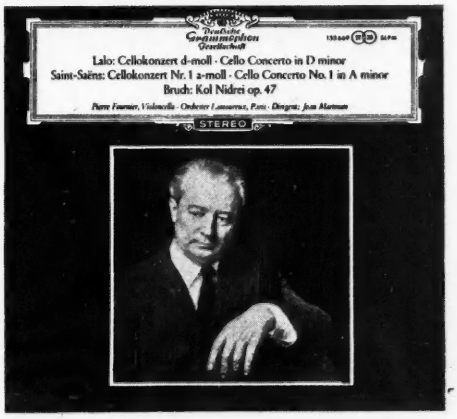
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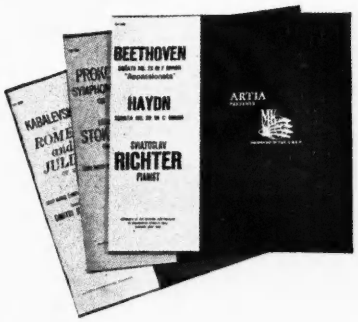
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To take the Brahms songs first of all, one can say with certainty that Maureen Forrester's moving performance of the two songs of Op. 91 is the best currently available. She expresses the interior spirit of these lovely songs and covers her tone most beautifully at their unforgettable final cadences. Otto Joachim's well played viola obbligato is perhaps a little too discreet and certainly sounds too distant on stereo, but this discretion is better than the plummy tone the recording gave Max Gilbert on Kathleen Ferrier's disc, while she herself, beautifully though she sings the songs, is not done justice to by the recording, and Margaret Bence did not seem to me wholly at ease with them in her recording.

Christa Ludwig carries off the honours in the Gypsy songs. Bence put any amount of go into them and her performance is exciting, but her vocal line sometimes suffers from her enthusiasm, and the piano part is not satisfactory. Maureen Forrester does not find quite the right style and seems to be working too hard to try and do so. These songs must sound uninhibited, redolent of the open air, and with nothing of the concert hall about them. John Newmark has matured a great deal since he accompanied Kathleen Ferrier in *Frauenliebe und Leben* and both in that cycle and in these other songs he is excellent. It is good to hear such clean pedalling in "Seit ich ihn gesehen" and its repetition on the piano alone at the end of the last song of the cycle. But the *sforzando* chords in this final song lack the chilling effect they should have.

Miss Forrester's interpretation is less passionate and intense than those of the two other singers in the above list, with whom it comes into competition, Ludwig and Seefried: but it is most sensitive, unfailingly musical, and sung with the beauty of tone one would expect from such a beautiful voice. She pleased me greatly by the way she softened her tone at "Still im Kämmerlein" in the second verse of "Seit ich ihn gesehen" (though it is not so marked), by the smoothness of the turns in "Er, der herrlichste von Allen", by the unrushed tempo of "Helft mir, ihr Schwestern", the well supported soft phrases of "Süsser Freund" and, again, by the reasonable tempo of "An meinem Herzen", in which song she suggests that, like Ludwig, she knows all about bouncing babies safely! Having written this about her performance of the cycle, I heard it through again, for the third time, and though I still feel the voice needs more tension in "Ich kann's nicht fassen, nicht glauben" and in the last song, Miss Forrester's interpretation seems to me very satisfying indeed. It will be exciting to watch the progress of this greatly gifted Canadian artist, who made her official début, in Montreal, only eight years ago. The balance between voice and piano is very good all through and either version, mono or stereo, can be cordially recommended.

A.R.

DEBUSSY. Songs. **Trois Ballades de François Villon:** Faulse beauté; Dame du ciel; Quoy qu'on tient. **La Grotte** (L'hermite). **Mandoline** (Verlaine). **Syrinx** (flute solo).
RAVEL. Songs. **Chansons Madécasses** (Parny): Nahandove, ô belle Nahandove; Aoua! Aoua! Mefiez-vous des blancs; Il est doux de se coucher. **Cinq melodies populaires grecques** (Calvocoressi): Reveille-toi; Là-bas, vers l'église; Quel galant; O joi de mon âme; Tout gai! **Don Quichotte à Dulcinée** (Morand): Chanson romanesque; Chanson epique; Chanson à boire. **Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau** (baritone), **Karl Engel** (piano), **Aurèle Nicolet** (flute), **Irmgard Poppen** ('cello). D.G.G. (M) LPM-18615: (S) SLPM138115 (12 in., 30s. plus 9s. 9d. P.T.).

Having "done the comparisons" between Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau and Gérard Souzay through a pretty large section of German Lied, we now, it seems, may have to continue the process through French song—though since so many of the Souzay LP recitals have been deleted, Fischer-Dieskau has some of the field to himself. For two years he staked his claim unchallenged on Fauré's *La Bonne Chanson*, his first incursion into this repertory: Decca for some reason failed to record Souzay in the work—though last month Philips, who provide Souzay's latest label, made good the deficiency. This new disc again suggests that the German baritone is less at home on French territory than the Frenchman is on German and Austrian soil.

It can go without saying, or at any rate saying at length, that Fischer-Dieskau sings with his wonted intelligence, fine tone, and command of nuance and shading. His recital is extremely enjoyable, the highpoints being the second Madagascan song, the spine-chilling "Méfiez-vous des blancs", which is highly dramatic, and the Greek Popular songs (sung in Calvocoressi's French translation, not Greek, as Irma Kolassi does on the Decca LP disc). The fourth of these, the Song of the Lentisk Gatherers, is marvellously realised; it seems to come drifting from the distance. There is no simple comparison to be made between these two Ravel sets of songs, the other version being Kolassi's coupling; nor would there be any point in making one, since the Kolassi disc has just been deleted. So Fischer-Dieskau's are the only versions available, and they are welcome.

Oddly enough, he also has no competitors in the three Villon Ballades. Souzay has recorded only the second of them, in a disc which overlaps further by containing the Don Quixote songs, *La Grotte* and *Mandoline* (LW5078)—the difference being that Souzay has orchestral accompaniment. One difference, rather: the other is that Souzay is a far finer interpreter of the pieces. The root of the matter is that Souzay sings a convincing French line; it has its peaks and dips, but remains a *line*, traced as if in one sensitive, unbroken sweep of the pencil, while with Fischer-Dieskau we are conscious of the notes he has decided to stress or swell, the words to which he plans to impart a special emphasis. His renderings do not flow convincingly: he is too busy making points. Good points, sensible points—but somehow holding up the music. I feel he has still to master the flowing quality of French song. And in *Mandoline* you feel he is making a notable effort to be light and tripping; to Souzay it comes naturally. In sum, the disc is full of enjoyable things, and a triumph of art, but I am not impelled to say—as of any of the Schubert recitals—that one could not imagine the songs better sung.

The stereo recording encompasses an uncomfortably wide dynamic range. If we don't want to be blasted out of the room, we must turn down to a point where the softer passages lose immediacy. The mono is more tractable, but less vivid. The accompaniment is well-balanced, and satisfactorily played. Aurèle Nicolet, the flautist, is exquisite, both in the Madegascan Songs and in a haunting (and extremely well recorded) *Syrinx*. The cover has all the French texts, while the inner sleeve offers paraphrases in English and German.

A.P.

SCHUBERT. German Mass in F major. Kyrie and Salve Regina for Mixed Choir. Regensburg Cathedral Songbirds and Choir, Franz Lehrndorfer (organ), members of the **Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra** conducted by **Theobald Schrems.** D.G.G. (M) LPM18676: (S) SLPM138676 (12 in., 30s. plus 9s. 9d. P.T.).

This is, I believe, the first complete recording of Schubert's *German Mass*. He composed it early in 1827, the year before he died, and so it is one of his last church works. The full title is "Songs for the celebration of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass": these "songs" being German hymns with texts by J. P. Neumann, a professor of physics and secretary and librarian of the Polytechnic Institute in Vienna (he had provided Schubert with an opera libretto which was never composed) intended to be sung at a Low Mass at the same points as the six sections of the Ordinary at a High Mass, but including also hymns to be sung at the Offertory and at the end of the Mass. D.G.G.'s inadequate sleeve note assumes that the free paraphrase of the Lord's Prayer, which Schubert added in an appendix, was the last piece to be sung: but in the list of titles on sleeve and label it appears after No. 3 (*Zum Evangelium und*

Credo). This optional hymn (*Das Gebet des Herrn*) would surely have been sung when the priest—who of course would be using the Roman Mass text—reached the *Pater Noster*, and so it would come between *Benedictus* (No. 6) and *Agnus Dei* (No. 7).

These simple hymns, in the chordal style of their type, have accompaniments for wind instruments, timpani, and organ: the instruments are given a few short passages on their own. The homely, tuneful music, removed from its setting, naturally becomes monotonous if the disc is played straight through. The most adventurous hymns harmonically are those at the *Sanctus* and the *Pater Noster*.

As a matter of interest such vernacular hymns at Low Mass have a history in Germany going back to the Middle Ages, but their use became regulated in the Cantual of Mainz (1605) as a riposte to the great success of Luther's edict "Let the people sing". The *Kyrie* and *Salve Regina*, for unaccompanied mixed choir and both in B flat, date respectively from March 1813 and March 1816 (the year of the C major Mass). They are beautiful little pieces, the *Kyrie* showing remarkable invention for a boy of 16. The Regensburg Cathedral Songbirds, as the sleeve note translates *Domspatzen* ("songbirds" being used as a euphemism for "sparrows"), sing the music of the German Mass with simple fervour and charm, and are excellent in the two other pieces.

The stereo recording does not add much as the balance between voices and accompaniment is very good on the mono disc, but there is that extra bit of atmosphere in the stereo. A.R.

SCHUMANN. Lieder. Requiem, Op. 90, No. 7. Maria Stuart Lieder, Op. 135: No. 1, Abschied von Frankreich; No. 2, Nach der Geburt ihres Sohnes; No. 3, An die Königin Elisabeth; No. 4, Abschied von der Welt; No. 5, Gebet. **Helga Mott** (soprano), **Erik Werba** (piano). Delysé Ⓜ EDP216: Ⓢ EDS-616 (7 in., 9s. 3d. plus 3s. 0½d. P.T.).

Well recorded and attractively sung, with fresh impulse and clear tone, these late Schumann songs (1853) are a curiosity which should not be overlooked. One need hardly stress the gratitude we feel towards a singer and a company which prefer to extend the repertory instead of merely jumping once again through the same half dozen hoops. *Requiem* is supposed to be the poem which Heloise composed on the death of Abelard. The Mary Queen of Scots songs are translations into German, by Freiherr von Vincke, of poems in two instances (Nos. 1 and 3) allegedly by the martyr's own hand: the original words of No. 2, "After the birth of a son" (i.e. James VI and I) are supposed to have been scratched by the royal hand on the wall of a chamber in Edinburgh Castle, where Miss Mott should sing them as an extra Festival attraction. *Gebet* is the translation of a Latin prayer found among the Queen's papers after her execution.

I wouldn't be prepared to say that these are the equivalent in emotional power of the death watch scenes in Schiller's play, but those to whom anything about Mary Stuart is of importance will not overlook them. They may not be Schumann at his most inspired, but they are romantic and appealing and Miss Mott does well by them. Erik Werba's accompaniments are clear and steady. P.H.-W.

THE PLAY OF DANIEL. A Twelfth Century Musical Drama.

Belshazzar's Prince	**Russell Oberlin** (counter-ten.)
Belshazzar	**Brayton Lewis** (bass)
Two Wise Men	**Jerold Sien** (bar.) and **Alan Baker** (bar.)
Three Envious Councellors	**Paul Ehrlich** (ten.), **Jean Hakes** (sop.), **Arthur Squires** (ten.)
Habakkuk	**Alan Baker** (bar.)
Belshazzar's Queen	**Betty Wilson** (sop.)
Daniel	**Charles Bressler** (ten.)
Darius	**Gordon Nyers** (bar.)
Two Advisers	**Alva Tripp** (bar.), **Jerold Sien** (bar.)
An Angel	**Russell Oberlin** (counter-ten.)
Herald Angel	**Russell Oberlin** (counter-ten.)
Satraps and Soldiers	**William Bohn** and boy choristers of the **Church of the Transfiguration, New York**

With the **New York Pro Musica Orchestra** conducted by **Noah Greenberg.** Brunswick Ⓢ SXA4001 (12 in., 30s. plus 9s. 9d. P.T.). Mono: AXTL1086 (10/59).

It was just a year ago that the New York Pro Musica, under its lively and energetic director, Noah Greenberg, held audiences spellbound throughout England and the continent of Europe with their performance of *The Play of Daniel*. An integral and important feature of the production was the number of processions wending their way beneath the vaulted and echoing transepts of cathedral or abbey, and their noble essence is here faithfully reflected in exceptionally good stereo. The dialogues, too, take on a greater dramatic impact than in the mono version, and the instruments sound more lifelike, being well spaced out as they were in the quasi-tableaux which occurred at various points in the drama itself. If there are some who saw the production and heard for themselves what fine singing and playing these American musicians are capable of, and who nevertheless fought shy of buying the mono disc, I would strongly advise them to invest in the stereo version. D.S.

OPERATIC

BLODEK. In the Well—excerpts.

Veruna	**Stepánka Stepanova** (sop.)
Lidunka	**Milada Subrtová** (sop.)
Vojtech	**Ivo Zídek** (ten.)
Janek	**Zdeněk Kroupa** (bass)

With the Chorus and Orchestra of the **Prague National Theatre** conducted by **Frantisek Skvor.** Supraphon Ⓜ SUF20021-2 (two 10 in., 29s. 6d. plus 14s. 6d. P.T.).

The Czech composer Blodek was born in Prague in 1834 and died, after some time of mental illness, in 1874. This charming opera (he wrote one other, *Zítek*), a comic opera of the village wooing type, came out in 1867: which is to say one year after Smetana's *The Bartered Bride*, which is perhaps what it most obviously resembles. What else was in the air? Donizetti, Gounod's *Mireille*, and more distant memories of Lortzing's *Czar and Carpenter*, perhaps.

This is a fresh and charming recording, sung with relish and splendid enunciation, and though it is only a selection, it has a sort of dramatic coherence; and the right sense of seriousness, which makes peasant heartbreak so touching. The overture occupies about half of the first of four sides: then comes the heroine's aria followed by the duet with the second lady; the quartet: the tenor solo: the bass's aria and then the intermezzo (the Kissing Moon) which was what struck admirers most at the first performances: the entr'acte is a most attractive piece, with its strong sentimental melody and its harps paling the colour slowly as the mood dies. There is then the second bass song: the duet for the men. Chorus, scene and Lidunka's aria and the full-hearted finale. *V Studni* ("In the Well") is an opera I shall hope to see one day. Meanwhile this selection gives a delightful foretaste. The singers are not unknown to those who follow the Supraphon label: the hero and heroine also take part in the complete *Bartered Bride*. The recording is good, but needs adjustment, or it will sound boxed. P.H.-W.

GIORDANO. Fedora—complete.

Fedora	**Maria Caniglia** (sop.)
Olga	**Carmen Piccini** (sop.)
Loris	**Giacinto Prandelli** (ten.)
De Siriex	**Scipio Colombo** (bar.)
Desiré	**Aldo Bertocci** (ten.)
Cirillo	**Christiano Dalamangas** (bass)
Dimitri	**Gilda Capozzi** (cont.)
Rouvel	**Aldo Bertocci** (ten.)
Lorek	**Pier Luigi Latinucci** (bar.)
Boroff	**Cristiano Dalamangas** (bass)
Grech	**Mario Zorgniotti** (bass)

With the Chorus and Orchestra of **Radiotelevisione Italiana, Milan** conducted by **Mario Rossi** (with Alonio Beltrame, piano). Cetra Ⓜ OPC1222/1-2 (two 12 in., 33s. 10d. plus 11s. 2d. P.T.).

Giordano's Fedora was first performed in November 1898, barely 15 months before Puccini's *Tosca*, and like Puccini's opera it is based on an unashamed piece of blood and thunder by Sardou. Both the Sardou plays were famous vehicles for Bernhardt, and just as Floria Tosca makes a wonderfully vivid operatic heroine, so does the aristocratic Fedora Romazoff, overtaken first by horror at her lover Vladimir's murder and then by abject love for his assassin, Loris.

Following this complete set, one is constantly struck by the tremendously professional skill of the adaptation, just as one is in a Puccini opera. There is no waste of effort, no moment when the audience's attention is allowed to wander away from the dramatic situation. As in Puccini there is great reliance on atmosphere, and particularly on contrast of atmosphere. So after the grim scene ending in Vladimir's death at the end of Act 1, Giordano deliberately begins Act 2 with a frothy Parisian waltz to set the new scene in Fedora's salon in Paris. Similarly, after the passionate love duet which ends Act 2, one is allowed to cool off in the opening pages of Act 3 in some skilfully atmospheric Swiss music. That scene-setting symbolises the brief period of fulfilment for Fedora and Loris, and when in the final scene the heroine is driven to take poison, her resignation and Loris's anguish that he

has driven her to this are set against the piping song of a peasant boy off-stage. One also remembers vividly the first scene between Fedora and Loris in Act 2, beginning with the glorious C major outburst of "Amor ti vieta" and then continuing with their conversation set against the piano playing of Lazinski (really a secret agent in disguise), first slow and romantic and later *con brio*. I wonder whether Puccini got the idea of using a piano for that aria in *La Rondine* from Giordano.

Constant comparison with Puccini is inevitable. Particularly Puccinian is the conflict in Fedora's mind when having arranged for the secret police to trap Loris as he leaves her house, she is utterly convinced by his reasons for killing Vladimir, forgives him at once and falls madly in love. Yet when *Fedora* was written such a situation would not readily be thought of as Puccinian, and on balance it was probably Puccini who learnt from Giordano rather than the other way round. Musically, too, Giordano uses what we think of as a Puccinian technique —the chattering of the servants as they play cards at the opening of Act 1, the easy cantilena, the moments of "heightened melody" which take the place of arias.

Yet—and I am sure this is what has prevented *Fedora* becoming the popular success it deserves to be in so many ways—Giordano rarely manages to write a really memorable melody. The 90 seconds of "Amor ti vieta" are a wonderful exception, and nagging phrases certainly do stick in the memory. Perhaps, like Walton in *Troilus and Cressida*, Giordano was afraid to go too far in seeking memorability in case his melodies became obvious. Puccini at least was not inhibited in that way.

But whatever faults *Fedora* might contain —and I don't want to minimise them—it is certainly very much alive, *even in a very* variable performance such as this recorded one. Like other Cetra performances it appears to be taken from an actual broadcast, and though it is vigorous it has little polish. In the name part Maria Caniglia has the dominance needed, but her voice is cruelly shown up in the more taxing moments. She is clearly past it in her first aria, "O grandi occhi". Prandelli shows again the pleasant personality and heady tone we know from his gramophone appearances as Rodolfo and as Luigi in *Il Tabarro*, and among the others Cristiano Dalamangas (who has appeared at Glyndebourne) as Cirillo, the coachman who is called on to beat his breast at his master, Vladimir's death, and Scipio Colombo as De Siriex, the ever-diligent diplomat (who even bicycles up to the mountain retreat in the last act) are both very good. Carmen Piccini as Olga, the other persistent friend of Fedora, is horribly shrill and tweety.

The recording is very poor, no better really than one would get from using a commercial tape machine on a radio broadcast. But I for one have had considerable enjoyment from this set, and I cannot imagine that we are likely to get a rival version in the near future. Besides, the two discs are sportingly put out at a bargain price. E.G.

HANDEL. Acis and Galatea: "As when the dove". **Julius Caesar:** "V'adoro pupille". **Clara Ebers** (soprano), **Halle Festival Orchestra** conducted by **Horst Tanu-Margraf.** Saga (M) EFID1008 (7 in., 5s. 4½d. plus 1s. 8½d. P.T.).

The only recording of Clara Ebers that I can recall having been issued over here is of the solo soprano parts in the finale of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony and in the C minor Fantasia, Op. 80 (DGM18361-2), in which she shared in the general praise of her colleagues. She has a rich-toned soprano voice, but fails to make Cleopatra's well-known aria at all seductive—the characteristic rise of the melody needs much more careful shaping than this—and the speed at which "As when the dove laments her love" is taken—it is marked *Andante* but here sounds like *Allegretto*—robs the air from *Acis* of much of its charm. Both these pieces are sung in German—and provide yet another argument against translations from the original language. The orchestral accompaniments do not show the sense of style one would expect from the Halle Festival Orchestra and the total effect of the disc is that of a rather business-like session in the studio. A.R.

PUCCINI. Suor Angelica: "Senza mamma". **Tosca:** "Vissi d'arte". **Turandot:** "Tu che di gel sei cinta". **Floriana Cavalli** (soprano), **Royal Philharmonic Orchestra** conducted by **Anatole Fistoulari.** H.M.V. (M) 7ER5197: (S) RES4285 (7 in., 10s. plus 3s. 3d. P.T.).

Not a good disc. Cavalli tries very hard but she does not sound completely in control, so that one is constantly expecting disasters that happily in fact do not occur. If of course your ear hears this as a specially beautiful voice quality—mine doesn't—*then* you will no doubt overlook the lack of style. "Tu che di gel" finishes curiously with Cavalli giving a sort of "miaow" on the last note. E.G.

ROSSINI. Il Barbiere di Siviglia—excerpts.

Count Almaviva	**Luigi Infantino** (ten.)
Rosina	**Giulietta Simionato** (m.-sop.)
Figaro	**Giuseppe Taddei** (bar.)
Doctor Bartolo	**Carlo Badioli** (bass)
Don Basilio	**Antonio Cassinelli** (bass)

With the Orchestra **Radiotelevisione Italiana** conducted by **Fernando Previtali.** Cetra (M) OLPC50140 (12 in., 16s. 11d. plus 5s. 7d. P.T.).

Excerpts: Overture; Ecco ridente in cielo; Largo al factotum; Se il mio nome; Una voce poco fa; La calunnia; Dunque io son; A un dottor della mia sorte; Contro un cor; Cara immagine; Il Temporale; Finale.

These excerpts come from a complete Cetra-Soria set listed in the first edition of W.E.R.M. but never generally available here. The overture is given a sprightly performance, the second subject in particular nicely "sprung". The singing is variable. Much the best performance is Taddei's as Figaro. "Largo al factotum" starts at a modest pace, and this allows the right pointing of phrases without a sense of rushing things, and the final virtuoso triplets sound all the more exciting. For Taddei this is rather a 'straight' performance: he refuses to play it for laughs but projects the character all the same.

Simionato, as in the complete Decca set, is not at her best. Perhaps she finds something uncongenial in the character of Rosina, for she provides little of the sparkle one expects from her. The liveliness of Taddei and her comparative flatness come out sharply in their duet "Dunque io son" and there is little bite in "Una Voce" with florid passages vague except with the help of intrusive 'h's. But of course with a voice of the quality of Simionato's there are many compensations. Luigi Infantino as the Count provides very attractive voice quality but, oh dear, the attempts at florid singing are pathetic even for today. Cassinelli's account of "La Calunnia" is sound but not edgy enough—the recording to blame in part—and Badioli is a little woolly too. Altogether quite a respectable potted version at a bargain price, though I cannot make out why the orchestral storm had to be included. The recording is, of course, rather dated. E.G.

SULLIVAN. H.M.S. Pinafore—complete.

The Rt. Hon. Sir Joseph Porter	**George Baker** (bar.)
Captain Corcoran	**John Cameron** (bar.)
Ralph Rackstraw	**Richard Lewis** (ten.)
Dick Deadeye	**Owen Brannigan** (bass)
Boatswain	**James Milligan** (bass-bar.), **John Cameron** (bar.)
Boatswain's Mate	**James Milligan** (bass-bar.), **Owen Brannigan** (bass)
Josephine	**Elsie Morison** (sop.)
Hebe	**Marjorie Thomas** (sop.)
Little Buttercup	**Monica Sinclair** (cont.)

With the **Glyndebourne Festival Chorus** (Chorus Master: Peter Gellhorn) and **Pro Arte Orchestra** conducted by **Sir Malcolm Sargent.** H.M.V. (S) ASD415-6 (two 12 in., 60s. plus 19s. 6d. P.T.). Mono: ALP1650-1 (1/59).

D'Oyly Carte (r. 1950) (5/61) (R) (M) ACL1054-5
D'Oyly Carte (r. 1930) (12/55) (M) ALP1293-4
D'Oyly Carte Company (2/60) (M) LK4334-5: (S) SKL4081-2

Although this is a stereo version of the mono release reviewed in January, 1959, more than the differences in sound between the two comes into question because since then the 1950 Decca recording with Martyn Greene (as Sir Joseph Porter) has been transferred to the cheaper Ace of Clubs series and the same company has released its more modern D'Oyly Carte recording in both mono and stereo, and this includes the dialogue. So now we have, with and without dialogue, recordings in stereo as well as mono. The issue is quite clear cut, I think. Those who want to hear the dialogue every time and who cannot bear to part with any of the traditional trappings will plump for the Decca set. On the contrary, those to whom sheer musicality is of prime importance will buy the new release, not only for the better quality of the singing but also the better orchestral playing and Sir Malcolm Sargent's much more subtle shaping of the score.

Much the same applies to the mono versions, but here there is a wider choice and those who want a cheap version should be very well satisfied with that on the Ace of Clubs label. It is excellent value for money and the recording is of far better quality than the date of its original issue might suggest. The sound in the new pressings is

distinctly better than it was in the original ones.

All that remains to add is that the new stereo issue does not attempt to suggest movement in any pronounced degree, but most certainly adds both presence and bloom. W. A. CHISLETT.

WEBER. Abu Hassan—complete.

Fatima	**Elisabeth Schwarzkopf** (sop.)
Abu Hassan	**Erich Witte** (ten.)
Omar	**Michael Bohnen** (bass)

With the **Berlin Radio Symphony Orchestra and Chorus** conducted by **Leopold Ludwig.** Saga (M) XID5055 (12 in., 15s. 10d. plus 5s. 2d. P.T.).

This recording originated about ten years ago with the Urania Company, but, except in the Overture, the liveliness and excellence of this performance of Weber's charming one-act opera draws attention away from its age. The best of the ten numbers are the Creditors' chorus, a very tuneful duet for Fatima and Abu Hassan at the end of side 1, and a hilarious Trio for the three characters. The score has some skilfully applied touches of Oriental colour. Elisabeth Schwarzkopf and Erich Witte are a very melodious pair of lovers, Michael Bohnen revels in his buffo part, and Leopold Ludwig keeps the little opera moving briskly. The course of events in the libretto, which is based on a story from the *Thousand and One Nights*, is clearly told in Frederick Youens's sleeve note. A.R.

VERDI. Falstaff—complete.

Falstaff	**Tito Gobbi** (bar.)
Fenton	**Luigi Alva** (ten.)
Ford	**Rolando Panerai** (bar.)
Dr. Caius	**Tomaso Spataro** (ten.)
Bardolph	**Renato Ercolani** (ten.)
Pistol	**Nicola Zaccaria** (bass)
Mistress Ford	**Elisabeth Schwarzkopf** (sop.)
Nannetta	**Anna Moffo** (sop.)
Mistress Page	**Nan Merriman** (mezzo-sop.)
Mistress Quickly	**Fedora Barbieri** (mezzo-sop.)

Philharmonia Orchestra and chorus (Chorus Master: Roberto Benaglio) conducted by **Herbert von Karajan.** Columbia (S) SAX2254-6 (three 12 in., 90s. plus 29s. 3d. P.T.). Mono: 33CX1410-12 (3/57).

Toscanini (3/55) (11/59) (M) RB16163-5

The big vocal ensembles in each of the second scenes of the three acts in *Falstaff* obviously stand to gain much from stereo—remarkably clear and well balanced though they were in the 1957 mono issue—and they do gain from the spread and spaciousness stereo gives them, as also do the many fine points of detail in this marvellous score. There is, however, some loss resulting from the greater distance between the listener and the music. Tito Gobbi whose finely conceived performance was criticised, with justice, by Desmond Shawe-Taylor for lacking in any hint of grossness and for tone and enunciation that did not convey "the juicy relish of comfortable girth" is further slimmed by stereo: and Anna Moffo's top A flats in the "bocca baciata" phrases of the duet between her and Fenton are certainly too faint, though beautifully poised. It is true that in the second of these, Nannetta is offstage, but not so far away as all that. On the other hand Teresa Stich-Randall, in the Toscanini recording, conveys no impression at all of having left the stage and sings the high note *forte*. There are also one or two places in the orchestral part where very soft notes are barely audible: for example the first bass note, at the end of the first scene of Act 1, of a dominant-tonic progression which has been heard immediately before an octave higher. This is certainly not a crucially important point, but every note in the score is precious. Stereo does not, unfortunately, reduce Fedora Barbieri's over-emphasised singing of "Reverenza!" and "povera donna", but in the rest of her music I do not think so badly of her as D.S.-T., though I agree with him that Cloe Elmo, in the other set, is infinitely better. Hearing the Toscanini again on more modern equipment I feel that I was unduly critical of Antonio Madasi's Fenton. In point of tone there is not really much to choose between him and Luigi Alva, but the latter is a more sensitive artist. I would say the same of Anna Moffo's Nannetta. Teresa Stich-Randall is very matter-of-fact over her exquisite fairy song in the last scene of the opera—(Moffo gives it a more ethereal quality)—and here I feel Toscanini's tempo to be too quick. Denis Vaughan has been drawing attention for some time to the numerous errors in the printed score of the opera that have come to light, and so perhaps Toscanini's *tempi* are not so invariably right as D.S.-T. supposes: but he is certainly right about Toscanini's "carrying through of each of the six scenes in a single impulse, whereas Karajan is sometimes tempted to dally". One such place D.S.-T. mentions, in his admirable quarterly review of July, 1957, is the love music for Fenton and Nannetta, but I cannot find it in my heart to wish it otherwise: I want to savour every note of their lovely duet. I wholly agree with D.S.-T., that Rolando Panerai is a superb Ford and that "nothing in the whole set is really more captivating" than his singing of the narrative to Falstaff "C'è a Windsor una dama". And what about that "dama", his wife Alice? Here Elisabeth Schwarzkopf, if less idiomatic than Herva Nelli, is incomparably the finer artist and stereo makes her tone even more ingratiating than before. There is, finally, no doubt in my mind that the playing of the Philharmonia Orchestra is unsurpassed.

The stereo recording is really what I am supposed to be reviewing—though I have allowed myself to be led into some comparisons between the Toscanini and Karajan performances—and for the stereo version of this glorious opera there must indeed be a very enthusiastic welcome. Those, however, who are considering buying one or the other of the mono versions have a hard choice to make. I could not bear to be without the enormously vital Toscanini, but I want the Karajan too. It means working overtime! A.R.

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ZANDONAI. Francesca da Rimini—complete.

Francesca	**Maria Caniglia** (sop.)
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Paolo	**Giacinto Pradelli** (ten.)
Malatestino	**Mario Carlin** (ten.)
Gianciotto	**Carlo Tagliabue** (bar.)
Ostatio	**Mario Tommasini** (bar.)
Biancofiore	**Amalia Oliva** (sop.)
Garsenda	**Licia Rossini** (sop.)
Donella	**Grazia Calaresu** (m.-sop.)
Altichiara	**Anna Maria Canali** (m.-sop.)
Ser Toldo Berardengo	**Aldo Bertocci** (ten.)
Il Torrigiano	**Enrico Campi** (bar.)

Chorus and Symphony Orchestra of **Radiotelevisione Italiana, Rome,** conducted by **Antonio Guarnieri.** Cetra (M) OLPC1229/1-3 (three 12 in., 50s. 9d. plus 16s. 9d. P.T.).

This is an opera I have only seen once (with Gilda della Rizza in Rome in the early thirties). I was greatly excited by it and remember my wonder that it was so little known outside Italy. It is a pleasure then to have access to an LP version of it: though much more than that I cannot honestly say about a version which has fading in the great love scene and which really, by present standards of recording, fails to do justice to the rich and imaginative orchestration by which the composer set such store—for instance, in the siege scene where Francesca, desperately unhappy, refuses to take cover (as we learnt to say) and stays out on the platform of the castle hoping she'll get a direct hit (she doesn't).

Zandonai's opera sticks pretty closely to the play which D'Annunzio wrote for Eleonora Duse and which had such a stormy first night in Rome. In its own flamboyant and scented manner that too was a beautiful poetic drama and the composer brought to it reverence as well as fine lyrical inspiration and a wonderfully skilful use of each and every device known at the time; taking a little here, a little there. It is interesting to hear, now so long afterwards, what a "modern" Italian opera on the eve of the 1914 War sounded like. Even today when its derivativeness somehow faintly disqualifies it, one can hardly fail to be struck by richness of the texture which indeed is very much akin to the sort of *art nouveau* lettering and trailing lilies of D'Annunzio's vellum and gold leaf original copy. The storm and stress, the machinations of the boss-eyed Malatestino (a woman in the original play played this part, here a tenor), the hateful limping Gianciotto to whom the heroine is bound and who stabs his brother Paolo when he catches him in Francesca's room, trapped by his cloak catching on the escape hatch bolt, all come up vividly enough in this performance which must at the time have seemed about as good as one could get (I reckon it must date from just after the revival, with Caniglia and Pradelli in 1950). Tagliabue has just the hectoring voice for Gianciotto, Pradelli is, as usual, an appealing singer of love music, and Maria Caniglia's voice, a little on the hard side perhaps and already sounding overworked, was then still a powerful dramatic instrument, carrying a load of passion and pain in the approved manner. It is a fine part: the scene where Francesca reads to her women, their discreet happiness, the slow extinction of the candles and the long love scene where Paolo and Francesca reading in the story of Lancelot and

Guinivere how they sinfully kissed, find their own lips united, are always likely to make an effect in an opera house, if only as contrast to the picture of ugly Renaissance strife and fratricidal war. The opera should have turned out a sort of Italian *Tristan and Isolde*, and probably simple listeners can so take it, ignoring its now unfashionable aroma. But now, sixteen years after Zandonai's death, one can hardly feel for long that this music is timeless. However, we should be grateful to Cetra for making it available: few people today can possess the numerous 78's of the early complete version. P.H.-W.

EUGENIO FERNANDI. Rigoletto (Verdi): "La donna è mobile". **Cavalleria Rusticana** (Mascagni): "Mamma, Mamma, quel vino è generoso". **Fedora** (Giordano): "Amor ti vieta". **Manon Lescaut** (Puccini): "Donna non vidi mai!". **Eugenio Fernandi** (tenor), **Philharmonia Orchestra** conducted by **Nicola Rescigno.** Columbia (M) SEL1691: (S) ESL6293 (7 in., 10s. plus 3s. 3d. P.T.).

Eugenio Fernandi is the strong-voiced tenor of the complete Columbia *Turandot* (with Callas) and is to be heard also in a version of Verdi's Requiem and on a previous issue of standard arias (*Martha*, etc.). Here he goes on with the good work. He has plenty of personality and is a strongly launched true tenor of the kind admired in Italy today. I do not find him a very ingratiating exponent of Count Loris's declaration, the hit tune and show stopper in *Fedora*, nor ideally seductive enough as he recounts to himself the wonder of Des Grieux's first meeting with Manon Lescaut, but he sings Turiddu's Farewell as if he meant every note and syllable of it, and the high-pressured "La donna è mobile" is the kind which brings down a not too critical house. A correspondent in Hong Kong, writing to admonish me for my lack of judgment, opines that in Puccini at least Mr. Fernandi is the superior of the late Jussi Björling, from which view I dissent. Ultimately, of course, whether you find a voice like this "good" or "not so good" is a matter purely of personal taste. Mr. Fernandi sings with energy and efficiency (as one could have said of, say, Pertile). But some of us will sometimes be put in mind of a buzz saw in action: the pressure and fast vibrato will commend themselves more to some tastes than to others and it is no use dogmatising about them. The recording is excellent and the orchestral accompanying helpful and sensitive. P.H.-W.

POETRY AND DICTION

GEORGE BUCHANAN. War-and-peace; On not being oneself; Juxtaposition; Theatrical Venus; Incarnation; Bright Day; God-Mother; Pray Down; Nobodies; Philanthropy; Anti-Bodies. Read by **George Buchanan.** Jupiter (M) JEPOC25 (7 in., 12s. plus 3s. 11d. P.T.).

This record carries an alarming blurb, consisting of a translation from a French writer of the utmost gravity. But Mr. Buchanan belies all this with his simple aphorisms. This is not really poetry at all, but a Child's Guide to Living, compounded of a popular journal's advice column jazzed up with ancient/modern ideas about bodily pleasures. This is almost an intellectual gloss on Mr. Cass' and Mr. Myers' *Police Notice*, given the O.K. of hard covers. *War and Peace* tells us that Mr. Buchanan can do better than this, and the record can be greeted politely as a promise of more to come. R.W.

SHAKESPEARE. Twelfth Night. Recorded by members of the **Marlowe Society of Cambridge** and professional players including **Dorothy Tutin, Jill Balcon, Tony Church, Peter Pears, Patrick Wymark, Robert Edison, Derek Godfrey, Prunella Scales, Patrick Garland** and directed by **George Rylands.** Complete and uncut texts as edited by **John Dover Wilson.** Argo (M) RG284-6: (S) ZRG5284-6 (three 12 in., 90s. plus 29s. 3d. P.T.). Recorded under the auspices of the British Council. (Full texts are available from Argo, price 5s. each. Text, plus annotation and Glossary, price 20s.)

Twelfth Night was the last and the most popular of Shakespeare's comedies. We were always taught that it had its *première* in Middle Temple Hall, but Argo suggests an earlier performance on Twelfth Night 1601 at Whitehall, prompted by the presence on that occasion of a real Duke Orsino, and with allusions in the text to living persons. I wrote in May about the Marlowe recordings, and here the players include Dorothy Tutin, Jill Balcon, Patrick Wymark and Peter Pears, whom we may presume sings Feste's songs, and very well too. We must also presume that the settings are contemporary. Argo also admit in their usual admirable note that this play is essentially visual. I am myself allergic to the involute humour of the comedies, but the popularity of this play continues to our own day. I hope I am not perverse in singling out this Malvolio as outstanding, and the Orsino is a joy to hear. The women sound artificial to me, but that is hardly a valid criticism in such parts. As I write, the astonishing popularity of this play has brought a revival in translation at the Vieux Colombier in Paris under the title *La Nuit des Rois*. I find this a difficult play to listen to, and the heavy-handed horseplay incomprehensible away from the stage, but those who want a recorded version (and since it is part of the canon it must be included in this splendid series) can hardly be disappointed in this set, which is beautifully presented. Now that the Elephant and Castle is being redesigned Londoners may relish the reminder that the Elephant pre-dates the Bakerloo by some centuries; the reference in Act Three, Scene Three, will be all too familiar to Provincials seeking a room south of the river. R.W.

LANGUAGE COURSE. Sparkling French. The course consists of four 12 in., 33⅓ r.p.m. discs with textbook. Atlas PA1-4 (£5 19s. 6d. inc. P.T.).

Lying midway in price between the Linguaphone or Assimil courses and the "talking phrase-books" of which there has recently been such a plethora, this is a proper language course, with an excellently produced bound textbook of some 230 pages (which also contains a hundred or so neat cartoons which help to drive home linguistic points). As the title suggests, the course is written on gay lines, and some of the dialogues in the 26 lessons (all accompanied by exercises and brightly-written notes on grammar or French customs) are genuinely amusing: a strongly idiomatic approach is adopted from the start. At first glance it might seem that the earlier dialogues were too advanced, but the exercises in fact make things quite plain and cover the grammatical background very thoroughly, and intelligent adult beginners should be able to follow the course without trouble. The text is excellently spoken on the discs by several voices. Sometimes it seems that the desire to be original—though a fresh and unacademic approach is to be welcomed—outweighs practicality of use: to give as paradigms of the verb conjugations *miauler*, *rugir* and *pondre* certainly makes a change from *donner*, *finir* and *rompre*, but how often does one need to say "I will lay an egg" or "We would mew"? The dialogues are most ingeniously constructed to illustrate various usages, and are likely to benefit the vocabulary even of those with a fair knowledge of the language already. Detailed consideration of a language course really lies outside the scope of a gramophone record review, but I wondered whether the author were not running his subjunctives rather hard (he's got me doing it now): many of us would think twice before launching out with something like "Je désire que vous choisissiez vos amis" or "Il faut que tu acceptes que je fasse ce qui me plaît". However, a good deal of lively thought has gone into the making of this course, and it can be thoroughly recommended as being clear, accurate, instructive and entertaining. Good luck to it. If it should later acquire companion courses in other languages which are as well done, I for one will be doing some brushing-up with them. L.S.

HUMOROUS

CASS/MYERS. Lady Chatterley; Police Notice. **Ronnie Cass** and **Peter Myers.** Collector (M) JDP15002 (7 in., 4s. 9d. plus 1s. 7d. P.T.)

Ronald Cass and Peter Myers were responsible for a brilliant revue at Wimbledon last year and they can turn in a good cabaret turn in the succession of, say, Douglas Byng. The Lady Chatterley song was given at Wimbledon with a good deal more point than here. *Police Notice* is about the advertisements displayed in shop windows by prostitutes: fair game, but the pay-off line may for some go over the bounds of even this game. A record for the smoking room. R.W.

ALAN MELVILLE. There are no Fairies at the bottom of my garden; Noël, Noël; Jets; Restoration Piece (with Fabia Drake, **James McKechnie** and Gretchen Franklyn); Common Talk; Down, down, down; The Art of Midlothian; Heredity; Old Girls; Yonder Blessed Moon (with Fabia Drake); Rita; Is it true what they say about Dixie? (with James McKechnie); Which Witch?. **Alan Melville** with **Charles Zwar** (piano). Decca (M) LK4394 (12 in., 25s. 9d. plus 8s. 4½d. P.T.).

This is really tremendous. The style will be familiar to those who remember the B.B.C. series "A to Z" and the Gingold revues during the war. It is also good to see the name of Charles Zwar on a label. One remembers Joan Swinstead singing *Please squeeze my toothpaste from the bottom, Mr. Price*, and listening here to Alan Melville one remembers that it is the discipline of the theatre that brings the brightest lights to the little screen. Here is a splendid collection of point numbers, full of wit and the most outrageous rhymes. Never mind the

pronunciation, but rejoice in a mind that can utter "Eugene Onegin" and "Lonnie Donegan" in a single breath, and can compose a line that reads "Lotte Lehmann, Liebfraumilch and Liszt". In spite of an unworthy sleeve, this is a gem of a record that should appeal to every reader. It is indeed one of those records that persuade civilised people to buy a gramophone.

R.W.

STANLEY HOLLOWAY. Brahn Boots; Tommy the Whistler. **Stanley Holloway** (comedian) with **Tony Osborne and his Orchestra**. Columbia (M) 45DB4653 (7 in., 4s. 9d. plus 1s. 7d. P.T.).

Brahn Boots, an old favourite, has that difficult mixture of "gorblimey" and banality that Stanley Holloway can turn to gold. It also reminds us at the end that Mr. Holloway is a singer of no mean ability, who used to record Albert Chevalier's coster songs. He could well do so again in this, Chevalier's centenary year. R.W.

CLASSICAL REISSUES

ORCHESTRAL

BERLIOZ. *La Damnation de Faust*: Marche hongroise; Ballet des Sylphes; Menuet des Follets. **Philh./Mackerras.** H.M.V. (M) 7EP7112: (S) PES5269 (7 in., 9s. 3d. plus 3s. 0½d. P.T.). Mono from DLP1168 (1/58); stereo appears for the first time.

SAINT-SAENS. *Danse Macabre; Le Rouet d'Omphale.* **Paris Cons./Martinon.** Decca (M) CEP698: (S) SEC5089 (7 in., 11s. plus 3s. 7d. P.T.). Mono from LXT5612, stereo from SXL2252 (2/61).

I can't muster quite as much enthusiasm for the Berlioz excerpts as M.M. did when reviewing the original issue from which they are taken, mainly because rhythms seem to me a little sluggish almost throughout. Still, if you like your Berlioz fairly solid, without much nervous vitality there is little to complain of, for the Philharmonia are on excellent form otherwise. I find the stereo version less satisfactory than the mono, because it is rather short on bass. Is this a technical hazard of stereo 7-inch discs, I wonder? Certainly the Decca disc containing two Saint-Saëns tone-poems also seems rather toppy in its stereo version. Like R.F., I find Martinon's interpretations a little hard-driven and lacking in charm, but there's no denying that this disc is excellent value for money in terms of minutes per shilling, and the recording—with the one reservation I have mentioned—is very acceptable. J.N.

COWELL. (a) *Symphony No.* 4.
PISTON. (b) *Symphony No.* 3. **Eastman-Rochester S.O./Hanson.** Mercury (M) MMA11136 (12 in., 28s. 6d. plus 9s. 3½d. P.T.). (a) from MRL2556 (8/58), (b) from MRL2549 (10/58).

I am delighted to see the Harvard composer Walter Piston's Third Symphony (written in 1947) back in the catalogue. I reviewed it at some length when it was first issued here in October 1958, and said at the time that the slow first and third movements seemed to me more impressive, or at least more convincing, than the quicker second and fourth. That is still true, but what I can now add is that the work wears well—as one might expect, for it is the product of a sincere and conscientious (in the good sense) musical mind. Narrower grooving has enabled Mercury without any loss of quality to give us Henry Cowell's Fourth Symphony as a bonus. This is a much slighter piece written in an idiom that suggests Vaughan Williams speaking with an Irish accent—attractive enough at a first hearing, but not a work I shall often come back to, I think. J.N.

MOZART. *Symphonies.* (a) No. 40; (b) No. 31. **L.S.O./Krips.** Decca Ace of Clubs (M) ACL128 (12 in., 15s. 10d. plus 5s. 2d. P.T.). (a) from LXT2819 (10/53), (b) from LXT2689 (6/52).
MOZART. *Symphonies:* Nos. 29 and 41 "Jupiter". **Berlin R.I.A.S. S.O./Fricsay.** D.G.G. Heliodor (M) 478121 (12 in., 15s. 10d. plus 5s. 2d. P.T.). From DGM18296 (5/58).

Here are two Mozart reissues which couple one of the late masterpieces with one of the earlier ones; I'm all for this if it helps to make these less familiar pieces better known. No. 31, the *Paris*, is given a brilliant, extrovert performance by Krips, with very forward recorded sound and, it must be admitted, rather shrill string tone. To some extent this suits the typically D major character of the work, but I could wish for a little more sensibility in the central *andante*. The recording of No. 40 in G minor is more sympathetic and the performance very vigorous and well articulated, except in that elusive first movement, where so few conductors take Mozart's *alla breve* time-signature and *Allegro molto* marking at their face value. Good value altogether, though you may care to be reminded that Beecham's version of the *Paris* is also available on a cheap label (Philips GBR6526), as are Kleiber's and Boehm's of No. 40 (Ace of Clubs ACL66 and Philips GBR6505 respectively). I am less happy about the Fricsay coupling of Nos. 29 and 41. The *Jupiter* can take Fricsay's rather leisurely approach, particularly since he obtains such beautiful phrasing from the RIAS strings. No. 29 in A major, in which Mozart first achieved a truly individual symphonic style, seems to me, on the other hand, to need a lighter touch than this; I don't like my Mozart rushed, but this performance does rather plod—particularly in the first two movements. The recording is very good, however, combining warmth with considerable clarity. J.N.

MAHLER. (a) *Symphony No.* 1; (b) *Kindertotenlieder;* (c) *Symphony No.* 9. (a) **V.P.M.,** (b) **Norman Foster** (bass-baritone) and **Bamberg S.O.** (c) **V.S.O.** all cond. by **Horenstein.** Vox (M) VBX116 (three 12 in., 56s. 7½d. plus 18s. 4½d. P.T.). The records are not available separately. (a) from PL8050 (7/54), (b) appears in this country for the first time, (c) from PL7602/1-2 (7/54).

Mahler's first and last complete symphony frame the highly characteristic *Kindertotenlieder* song cycle; it would be difficult for a single box to offer a more convenient or economical way of making an initial acquaintance with the essentials of the composer's style.

Convenience, actually, is limited by an odd coupling: to play the First symphony involves extracting two records where one would do, to play the Ninth three where two would do. But in any case convenience and economy are by no means the only advantages of the issue, for Horenstein persuades each of his three orchestras into an extremely sympathetic account of their music; in one respect, possibly even over-sympathetic. Mahler, taking perhaps a cue from Beethoven, had a weakness for parodying with large symphony orchestras the small rustic orchestras of Austrian popular music which, over the years, have given so much pleasure. The degree of affection with which the parody is undertaken is never made very clear, but the joke, begun as far as the symphonies were concerned in the first, was not considered to be played out even by the ninth, which indeed has two large and consecutive movements with elements of parody. It is these elements Horenstein stresses perhaps unwisely, but equally he insists that his brass stress the elements of strength in both symphonies, and his strings the element of nostalgic beauty more particularly evident in the ninth. Richer, stronger and better sustained string playing than that of the Vienna Symphony Orchestra in this symphony's finale it is difficult to come by, and the beauty of the music is scarcely surpassed anywhere in the symphonies.

The recording is not quite the equal of the performances. At most of the music's quieter moments it is very good, but at the climaxes the total sound is receded in a disproportionate degree. On the whole, the smaller orchestra of the *Kindertotenlieder* comes off better. Norman Foster sings with the dignity appropriate to the bereaved father, if also with a vibrato which only just fails to obliterate the intervals of Mahler's many chromatic passages. The recording treats his voice a little less generously than it does the orchestra, contriving to keep it slightly out of focus until *In diesem Wetter*, the last song, when the balance goes quite awry and the storm seems almost entirely an orchestral one. Nevertheless the songs themselves have been treated generously in the provision of both the sung German words and an English translation. M.M.

VIVALDI. *Concerto Grosso in D minor Op.* 3 *No.* 11. **Schneiderhan, Baumgartner** (violins) **Starck** ('cello), **Kaufmann** (harpsichord), **Lucerne Festival Strings/Baumgartner.** D.G.G. Archive (M) EPA37199: (S) SEPA181199 (7 in., 12s. plus 3s. 11d. P.T.). Mono from APM14097 (10/59), stereo appears for the first time.

You may well know this concerto in the orchestral transcription by Siloti, or possibly in the arrangement for four harpsichords and strings by Thurston Dart (who merely did what Bach had already done with No. 10 of the same set). However, here it is in its original form, as Vivaldi published it in his *L'Estro Armonico*, and very refreshing too. The Lucerne Festival Strings treat it, quite rightly, as chamber music, and although one may regret the loss of all those sweeping strings it does gain in both vigour and clarity. The stereo version, incidentally, is a great help in differentiating the two violins from one another. J.N.

INSTRUMENTAL

CHOPIN. *Polonaises Nos.* 2 *and* 3. **Malcuzynski** (piano). Columbia (M) SEL1688: (S) ESL6291 (7 in., 10s. plus 3s. 3d. P.T.). Mono from 33CX1690 (4/60): stereo from SAX2338 (11/60).
SCHUMANN. *Toccata, Op.* 7; *Novellette, Op.* 21, *No.* 1. **Richter** (piano). D.G.G. (M) EPL30573 (7 in., 9s. 3d. plus 3s. 0½d. P.T.): (S) SEPL121573 (7 in., 12s. plus 3s. 11d. P.T.). Mono from LPM18597, stereo from SLPM138077 (3/60).
GRANADOS. *Goyescas:* The Maiden and the Nightingale. *Allegro de Concierto.* **Joyce** (piano). Saga (M) STP1013 (7 in., 7s. 2½d. plus 2s. 3½d. P.T.). From XID5007 (10/59).

Malcuzynski plays these two Chopin polonaises marvellously well. Surfaces are not silent on either mono or stereo, and the piano has a tendency to sound further away in soft passages than it does in loud ones,